Redbook

Beginning

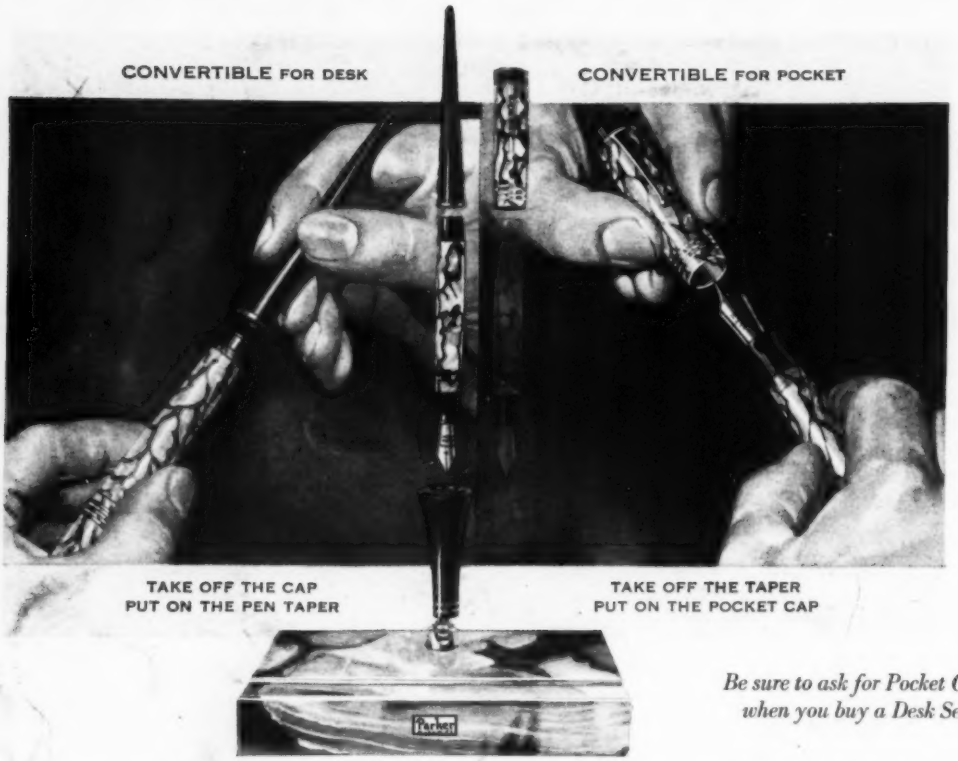
They Thought They Could Buy It ... *Happiness!*

by *Dorothy Walworth Carman*

CONINGSBY DAWSON'S novel

THE AUCTIONING OF MARY ANGEL

· 8 Short Stories ·



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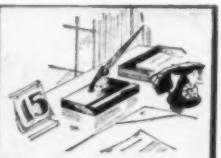

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Photo by Nickolas Muray

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Camp and College

By C. MILDRED THOMPSON

Dean, Vassar College

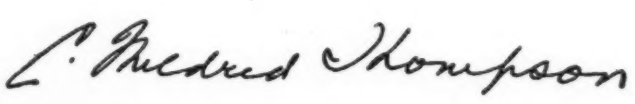
NOT LONG ago I heard a director of Physical Education comment upon the great difference in the past twenty years in interest in sports and in skill in all kinds of out-door games among girls in college. Most colleges today place ability to swim among the requirements for graduation. This is the only requirement for the A. B. degree which is met by most students before they enter college. Only six out of the three hundred in our freshman class of last September could not swim. Most of them are expert swimmers and know the technique of life-saving as well. No college can supply the demand for tennis courts. The number of courts may have been doubled in the past five years and yet the side lines are continuously crowded with would-be players awaiting their turn. And so it is with other sports, hockey, basket-ball, archery, deck-tennis, etc.

Only a few of the day schools situated in cities can command large playgrounds or are so fortunate as to possess a swimming-pool; and even boarding-schools, all except the richest in equipment, are limited in their facilities for a varied out-door life. The summer camp, therefore, supplements the winter school, and is in large measure responsible for the growing enthusiasm for sports.

Exuberant vitality and superb physical fitness are two great assets which a girl can take with her from camp to college. But important as these are, they do not constitute the chief preparation which camps can make for college. Expertness in group living, not merely in studying but in living together in work and play, is one of the essential qualifications for success in college. In this respect summer camps can be of value to all girls, but they are of special importance to the girl who does not go to boarding-school.

In another way, also, camps can furnish a definite part of the necessary preparation for the girl who has not been away from home. Camp-life makes an easy transition from family direction to the independence and self-reliance that must come with college years.

The girls now in college who have gone to camp are the first to testify to the value of their experience. This contagious enthusiasm of the campers is doubtless the chief cause of the widespread vogue of the summer camps for girls. Twenty years ago camps for girls were little known. Today about one-half of our students are camp alumnae before they come to college, and no summer occupation is more eagerly sought by the college student than that of "counselor" at her old camp.



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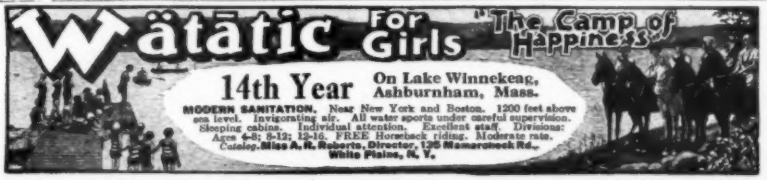
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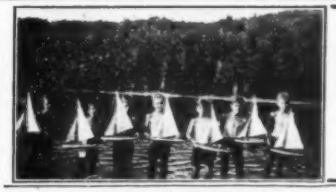

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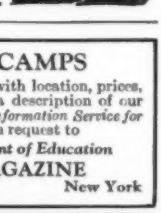

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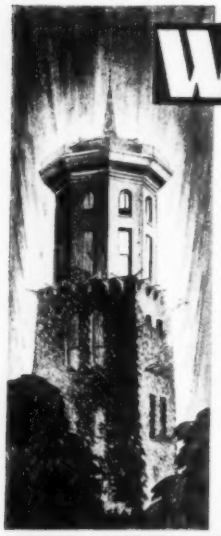

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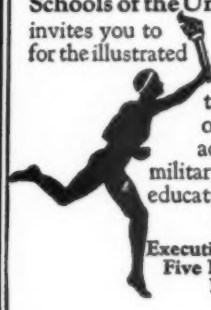

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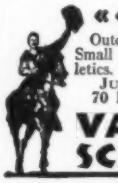

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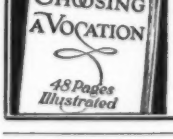

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Fate

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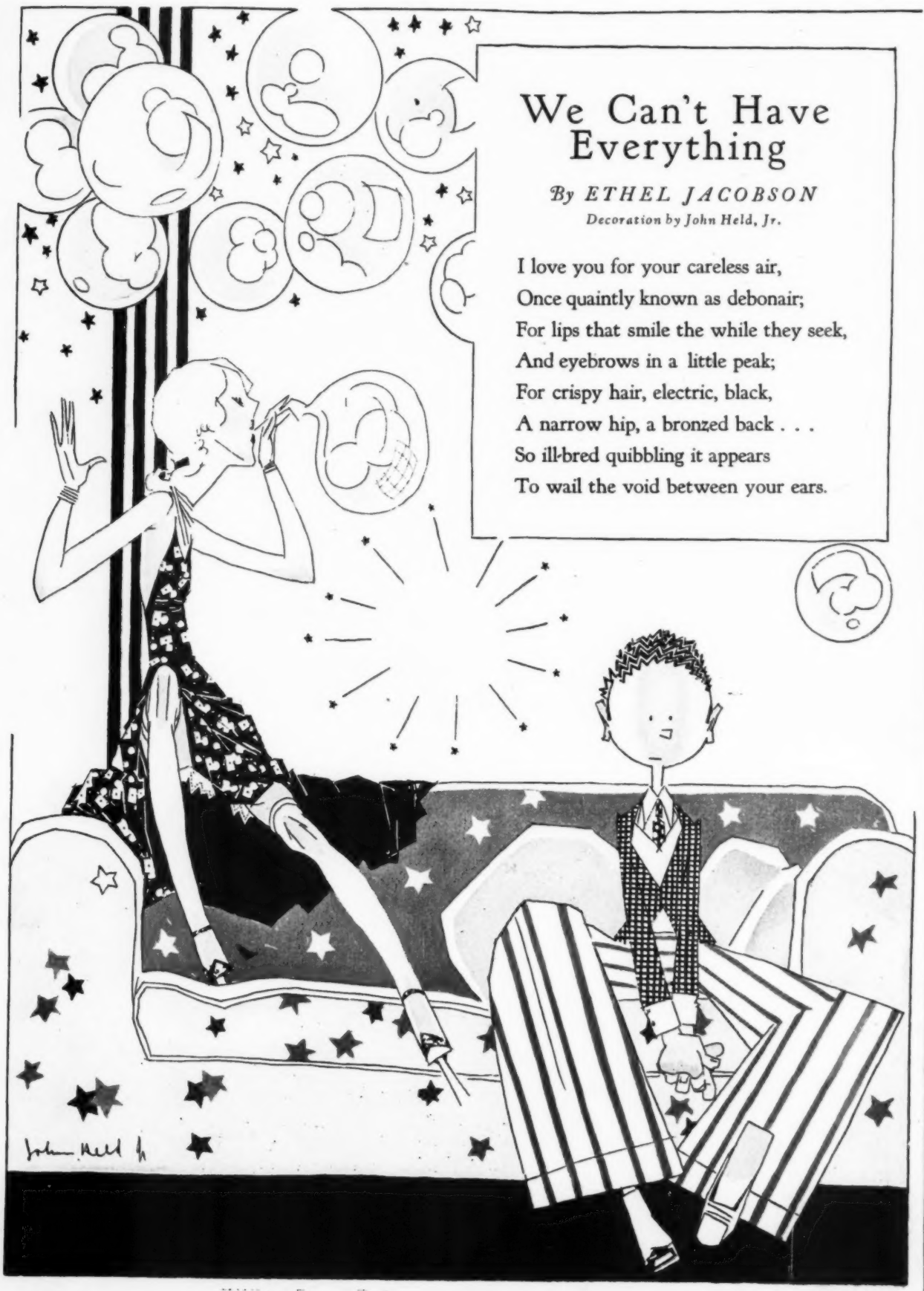
"Men at some time are masters of their fates;
The fault, dear Brutus, is not in our stars,
But in ourselves, that we are underlings."

NO one is so primitive that he does not form a feeling about fate; no one has advanced so far that he can shake off all the shackles in the idea of destiny.

What part may a man play in the shaping of his own life? Scientists have sought to discover this, and mathematicians to formulate it in figures. The Persian astronomer who was the poet of the Rubaiyat says: "The Ball no question makes of Ayes and Noes. . . . But Right or Left as strikes the Player goes. . . . And He that tossed you down into the Field. . . . He knows about it all—He knows—HE KNOWS!"

The great Goethe gave voice to fatalism: "Man supposes that he directs his life and governs his actions, when his existence is irretrievably under the control of destiny."

This Emerson denied in his declaration that fate consists merely of unpenetrated causes. . . . The battle goes on today; has anyone found a fairer phrase for his feeling than that of the supreme poet of our literature which Mr. Segrelles has interpreted upon this page?



We Can't Have Everything

By ETHEL JACOBSON

Decoration by John Held, Jr.

I love you for your careless air,
Once quaintly known as debonair;
For lips that smile the while they seek,
And eyebrows in a little peak;
For crispy hair, electric, black,
A narrow hip, a bronzed back . . .
So ill-bred quibbling it appears
To wail the void between your ears.

COCKCROW

By ANGELO PATRI

Decoration by Franklin Booth

TREADING my way through the Vatican galleries, I stood before a wonderful picture of a man dressed in a blue smock, his beautiful tear-stained face raised toward heaven in prayer for forgiveness. To me that picture is the greatest among the great.

"St. Peter," whispered the guide in my ear. "You know. St. Peter. He weeps in the garden. You know. He keeps now the key of heaven."

Poor St. Peter! I think I see him as he stood in the dim light of the morning denying he knew the Man. I feel the thrill of horror that ran through him when he sensed what he had done. The pain that stabbed his heart when he realized that he had betrayed the cause he loved better than life echoes in my own. The shame that burned his face at the sound of the mocking barnyard cheer sends its hot breath over me. Peter was but a man, and his duty demanded that he measure up to God. Poor Peter!

The disciple loved his Master. He had meant to stand by, to defend and uphold the cause of righteousness. He had planned the blistering phrases he would hurl at the enemy; he knew what majesty and fire he would throw into his scathing glance; he had determined just how he would behave in the hour of trial.

But things were so different that he lost himself. The jeering crowd, the stern soldiers, the helpless prisoner, the dread verdict, the swift terror of it all, overwhelmed him in a sea of strangeness. So he denied the Man. And the horrible cock crowed, and the shamed Peter went out into the garden and suffered the torture of the soul that has been challenged and has failed.

Who among us has not spent his hour in that garden, his heart branded by the shame and the merciless mockery of the barnyard crowing, the shrill shout of the craven fool? Who has not suffered through his own weakness, his own impulsive cowardice, his own unknown, undependable self? But failure and repentance and renewed effort are forces in our growth. None who aspire and achieve may evade those forces. Each man, each woman, who would be worthy of his name must spend his hour in the Garden of Olives. But that too passes. The light of day changes the face of things. Grief dries its own tears, and hope starts out anew.

Have you made a mistake? Get up and go on. Have your friends turned their backs? Go on. Have you failed flat, denied all that you loved best? Rise up and go on. Even if you do not know where you are going, go on. The way will open step by step.

Pay no heed to the barnyard crowing. Go on; and one day there will sound in your ears another song. St. Peter, loving, impulsive, triumphant St. Peter who understands all about it, holds the key to heaven. The gates will swing wide and the trumpet will sing a new song: Well done, good and faithful servant. Just go on.

by
Arthur D.
Howden Smith

Illustrated by Pruett Carter

Women America Remembers—

V. Lola Montez—

IN Greenwood Cemetery, in Brooklyn, there is an untended grave with a headstone that bears the simple inscription: "MRS. ELIZA GILBERT, Born 1818—Died 1861." And under that flowerless patch of sod lies all that was mortal of Lola Montez, Countess of Landsfeld, Baroness Rosenthal, Canoness of the Order of St. Theresa, sometime favorite of Louis First of Bavaria, and by virtue of his trust Bavaria's uncrowned ruler during one of the most critical periods in the country's history. Sinner rather than saint, beautiful, independent and intelligent, she was vital and self-sufficient as were few women in her day. And yet she failed in everything she attempted—even in sinning, for she ended her stormy career in an odor of sanctity, putting away from herself as far as she could the tapestried memories of her past.

She was born in Limerick. Her father, Edward Gilbert, an ensign in the old 25th Foot (King's Own Scottish Borderers), had risen from the ranks, no mean success in the British army a century ago. Her mother was an Irish girl who claimed a noble Spanish ancestry and certainly foreshadowed Lola's beauty. They must have had ambitions for their child, for they christened her, with bewildering prodigality, Maria Dolores Eliza Rosanna; and Gilbert sought an opportunity to gain promotion by applying for service in India. Here, presently, he died of the fever. His widow, not grieving overmuch, soon married a brother-officer, and Lola was sent home to be educated in the care of her stepfather's family.

It was ten years before she saw her mother again, and any pleasure the meeting afforded was banished by an announcement that a marriage had been arranged for her with an elderly jurist in the Indian Civil Service. Lola, whose temper was at least Irish if not Spanish, promptly

Fifth in a series of intimate portraits of women famous for personality, beauty, wit, or audacity, or because of the tragedy left in their train

eloped with the only man available to her, Lieutenant Thomas James, of the 21st Native Infantry (Bengal Establishment), a clumsy oaf of thirty who had visited England in her mother's train. Followed then another experience of life in cantonments in the East, which was terminated by Lola's discovery of her husband's infidelity. She left James in a towering rage, and on the long voyage home—possibly by way of retaliation—managed to compromise herself with a dashing aide-de-camp of the Governor-General. James heard of it, and retorted by suing for a judicial separation, which he obtained.

So Lola found herself, at twenty-four, cast adrift to fend for herself in the London of 1842—not exactly an enviable situation. But she had a little money, and more than that, her beauty—a glorious figure, shapely yet slim, and big, lustrous blue eyes set off by jet-black hair and ivory-white skin.

The one means of livelihood open to her, she realized, was the stage. She decided to capitalize her Spanish appearance, buried her middle-class origin under a name she gracelessly purloined from the leading matador of the bull-rings, and after a course of instruction made her first essay as a dancer at Her Majesty's Theater, June 2nd, 1843, in the presence of the Queen Dowager, the King of Hanover and a batch of lesser royalties. According to the newspaper notices, her performance was very creditable, but she was hissed off the stage by a claque led by Lord Ranelagh, whose advances she had declined.

No manager in Early Victorian London would have dared to present an actress who had incurred such aristocratic enmity, and Lola was exiled to the Continent. In Warsaw she had a similar experience with the iron viceroy Paskievich, who ordered her deported after she had defied him. Lola, undismayed, did what only she was capable of doing: journeyed to St. Petersburg, and won the passing admiration, a slice of the bank-roll and a measure of the respect of the viceroy's master, the Czar Nicholas I.

A few months afterward she met Franz Liszt in Dresden, journeyed with him to Paris and with his influence obtained an engagement at the Opéra, which, alas, was no more successful than her previous bids for recognition as a dancer. But the critics who minimized her talents did not fail to stress her beauty, and she was immediately accepted as a member of the group of wits and *bon vivants* who gathered around Alexandre Dumas at the Café de Paris. Dumas loved her, but the man who fascinated her was a minor celebrity, Dujarier, literary editor of *La Presse*.

She seems to have entertained more than a casual passion for Dujarier, for after his death in a duel—which had nothing to do with her—she declared bitterly to Dumas that she was finished with love; and when that gay young scoundrel Alexandre *fils* inquired what purpose should animate her future, she responded, with a cynicism rare to her: "I am going to try to hook a prince."

As a matter of course, she directed her steps to Germany, which offered a choice of two-score princes, great and small. At Baden-Baden she toyed with the Prince of Orange, whom she had met during a visit to the Governor-General of India; but her plans required a prince who was also a sovereign, and she promptly abandoned Orange when his Serene Highness Henry LXXII of Reuss, who *(Please turn to page 143)*

She met Franz Liszt, journeyed with him to Paris. Dumas loved

ed *her, but the man who fascinated her was a minor celebrity, Dujarier.*

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. . . and at the same time reveals *natural* loveliness"

says the celebrated

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Desfossé has a most unusual salon in Paris . . . mosaic floors, marble walls, lend an elegance of background women delight in.

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L. Desfossé

IF you've been to Paris . . . if your friends have been to Paris . . . you probably know of the chic beauty salon of Desfossé on the Rue St. Honoré. The establishment Desfossé has been a training school for many of the now famous French specialists, including Emile Massé of the Rue Daunou.

This expert of international professional importance urges you to use Palmolive Soap. He says: "I always advise my clients to wash with Palmolive Soap and warm water, making first a lather with both hands, then thoroughly rinsing with warm water and with cold, thus toning up the complexion."

Desfossé is not alone in his opinion of the tonic effects of palm and olive oils in soap. Today, a tremendously impressive group of more than 19,800 beauty specialists—throughout the world—advise Palmolive.

Ordinary soaps won't do

Beware of using crude soaps, soaps made of undesirable fats, soaps artificially colored or highly perfumed. They may be harmless. But to experiment is dangerous. Palmolive is made of no other oils but those of palm and olives. It is these oils which give it Nature's own green color. They make unnecessary the addition of heavy perfumes.

"The skin must be thoroughly washed, but care taken to employ only the soap which gives the greatest benefits with the least inconvenience," the great Desfossé warns you. So many soaps are irritating.

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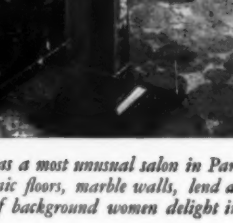

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Redbook

MAY
1930

EDWIN BALMER, *Editor*
DONALD KENNICOTT, *Associate*

VOLUME LV
NUMBER 1

A COMMON-SENSE EDITORIAL

It's An Ill Wind

BY BRUCE BARTON

THE best story of the stock-market deflation was told me by a prominent citizen of St. Louis, a kindly, conservative old gentleman who now devotes more time to giving his money away than to trying to make any more.

Said he: "I have a friend in Chicago who has been living on an extended scale, and the news was brought to me that he had been completely wiped out in the market. I was told that he had sublet his apartment on the lake shore, discharged his chauffeur and most of his servants, and moved into a little farmhouse in the country. Those who brought the information gave me the impression that he actually lacked the necessities.

"That night I took a train to Chicago, and the next day at lunch I told him what I had heard, and added as tactfully as I could that there were some of his friends who would like to join and underwrite his expenses until he could get on his feet again.

"He was very much touched by my offer of help. But when I finished, he made an amazing answer. He said he had not been in the market at all for more than two years. With the exception of the money in his own business, which was not affected, his whole fortune had been invested in bonds. He was just as well off as he'd ever been.

"But he had grown deathly tired of the expense and folly and futility of city life—too many clubs, too many parties, too much entertaining of the same people all the time, too many false and artificial standards for the children; so he had taken this golden opportunity to run away from it all.

"His acquaintances assumed that he had dropped out of their financial class and did not embarrass him with invitations. Even his own family believed him broke. For the first time in their lives the children were beginning to show an intelligent interest in their future careers. Altogether it was the greatest move he had ever made; and with tears in his eyes, he begged his St. Louis friend not to betray his secret."

I have taken sufficient liberties with the story so that the man will not be discovered because of me. But the essential facts are as I have stated them.

It would not surprise me if, after the next panic, a large number of men pull this page from some private compartment in their desks, and say to themselves: "It's an ill wind that doesn't benefit somebody. Now is the time to take advantage of that idea which was in *Redbook* back in 1930."

MOTHER'S DAY

MAY 11 TH

MARY HILL WILLARD
Mother of Frances E. Willard

MARGARET M. CARNEGIE
Mother of Andrew Carnegie

SARAH BUSH LINCOLN
Step-mother of Abraham Lincoln

VICTORIA MOOR COOLIDGE
Mother of Calvin Coolidge

ELIZA TOMLINSON FOSTER
Mother of Stephen Collins Foster

ABIGAIL SMITH ADAMS
Mother of John Quincy Adams

MARTHA BULLOCH ROOSEVELT
Mother of Theodore Roosevelt

MARY BALL WASHINGTON
Mother of George Washington

MOTHERS FAMOUS PEOPLE REMEMBER

In its Mother's Day wrap the Sampler takes on new charm.

Don't you forget !

To her, your remembering—your remembrance—your thoughtfulness of her, is the most wonderful thing in the world.

Don't let carelessness—thoughtlessness—on your part cause your mother a hurt. And your forgetfulness would hurt her beyond measure.

What more fitting to carry your thoughtful tribute than Whitman's famous and beloved Sampler. What a tasteful and graceful message to mother from you—this charming Sampler in its special Mother's Day wrap showing the flowers she loves in quaint cross stitch.

"ON THIS DAY LET NONE FORGET MOTHER; BE SHE EVER SO FAR AWAY LET SOME TRIBUTE OF LOVE BE SENT HER."

Carry the Sampler to her if possible. If not, any Whitman agency will gladly mail it for you.

Whitman's Chocolates

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Illustrated by J. Clinton Shepherd

"Believe not that Man changes his nature"

THE constant and consistent element in life seems to be "human nature." Times change most spectacularly. There is enormous transformation of conditions under which our natures assert themselves; and the habiliments with which we deck our impulses, good and bad, bear new designs; but the soul of man—and of woman—proves surprisingly stable.

How exactly the ancient poets, whom we call the Psalmists, found in themselves the feelings which we experience today in our greatest joys and sorrows!

The two queens who first emerge clearly as individuals in the great ancient civilization of Egypt were merely "modern" women living in another time. The emotions they stirred, both of love and of loathing, are identical with those reported at golden wedding anniversaries and in the divorce courts of our day.

Hatshepsut was the masterful, domineering woman. "Hatshepsut, King" (not queen) "of the North and South, conqueror of all lands, the mighty one," her cartouche describes her. She was married to one Thotmes, who, after her death, became the greatest conqueror of all the Pharaohs. Hatshepsut was a very efficient and able woman; and the impression she made upon her husband is indicated by the fact that, after her death, Thotmes had her name cut out of every monument where the chisel would do the work, and in all other places had her name plastered over.

Thiys was a girl of unknown origin, loved by King Amenhotep III, and lifted by him to the highest station; and throughout his life he gave her the utmost devotion. From frontier to frontier we find her name always associated with his; he left no record which does not include her with him; always she was beside him on the throne. "Royal wife," he delighted to call her. "The great lady of two lands, Queen of the North and South."

The story of today is of the Hatshepsuts and Thiys of our time and living in our suburbs—and of their husbands. A story of a civilization utterly changed, but of human nature the same; a story such as starts upon the next page of this magazine, in which the constant and consistent factor really is "human nature," and the capricious and unpredictable are the conditions under which life works itself out.

THEY THOUGHT THEY COULD BUY IT

A novel of young people, some of them surely like you or yours —— and each of them responding, in his or her own way, to the lash of the most unrelenting whip in the world —— the hope of Happiness.

by Dorothy Walworth Carman

Illustrated by R. F. Schabelitz

THE air was faintly scented with face-powder. The Brookstone Woman's Club was holding its April meeting in the new clubhouse auditorium. It was a spacious room with a dark floor, tinted walls, and casement windows between dove-colored velvet curtains. Outside the blaze of glass was a flock of pigeons, fluttering and settling like white leaves. Along the wall, on either side of the stage, were purple silk banners, breathing gently in the draft. All afternoon the members heard dogs barking dully, like dogs in dreams, and harsh trains snuffling in the railway station. They heard the sleek curtains beating, the rough scratching of the secretary's pen, and the lush voice of the speaker.

The stage was lined with folds of dove-colored velvet, like the windows. The president sat to the left, with a silver fox fur laid in her lap like a plume. Her gloves were buried in its soft glitter. Her face, over an amethyst dog-collar, was tinged with the speaker's moods, now courteously cheerful, now elegantly depressed. Occasionally she clapped, making the blurred sound of suède enthusiasm. She lifted her eyebrows and nodded to the rows of turbans below her, as a signal to tinge with emotion also. They must show the speaker they understood.

To some faces, lifted properly toward the stage, the speaker was a dark woolen haze, and her words confused their ears like the sound of pouring water. Their bodies had come into this room—girdled, gartered, covered and powdered. But their minds had closed the shutters and gone off with a basket of fears. They lifted each one out of the basket, shook it and put it back in again. The same old collection: Husband, children, MAIDS, health, Aunt Evelyn—maids, CHILDREN, husband, health, Aunt Evelyn—HEALTH, maids, children, Aunt Evelyn, husband. . . . .

Then, with a start, they remembered this entertainment in the auditorium. They came back and set down the heavy basket. Again they felt the leather folds of their purses, the crumple of their handkerchiefs, the drawstring over their thick bosoms, the hot silk of their bloomers, and the wooden seats, sharp under their knees. They stirred into a new position, listened anxiously. . . . . Then, without knowing, they slipped away with the burden again. This speaker was not good enough to keep them from fussing with their fears. Better-paid speakers did.

Other faces, down in the tilted rows, were a helpless mesh for every sensation. The dark net, spread in the ocean, caught too much. They heard coughing, sighing, umbrellas dropping, and restless feet whispering on the floor. They counted the pigeons outside the window, priced the hats in the row ahead, watched a purple shadow that wavered on the ceiling. And all the while the speaker's words drifted in and out of their ears. . . . . Others wondered if it would be impolite to go.

A few heard and understood the speaker entirely. She was a large, turgid woman, dressed in wool, permanently enthusiastic over love. She had the unrelaxing cheerfulness of a woman who has never been in love, and the face of one who talks too often about marriage. She wore a short necklace of hard round amber balls.

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She leaned against the glazed table with its fur bouquet of pussy-willow and talked earnestly about the social problems of women in industry.

Amelia Browning, Joyce Millard and Lydia Smith were near the silver haze of the east window. All three were what the Brookstone *Bugle* called "young matrons," but only Joyce was beautiful. Amelia's face was too blunt, and Lydia's too sharp.

Amelia wore a turban dotted with cherries, a loose pink dress and a skunk fur. On her knees lay a warm bag that smelled of rolls and sugar suffocated in paper. Lydia was dark, with the pointed face of a young, earnest raccoon. She wore stiff black feathers that brushed down to her eyebrows, and her throat was wound in a mauve scarf. The blue veins showed in the backs of her narrow hands, and her rings were an opal and a diamond. Joyce had a green dress with pearl buttons down the front and a ribbon belt. Her hat was yellow straw. She wore a white wool coat and a cloud of fur. She was blonde.

"Now, ladies," the speaker was saying, "I want to mention another phase of women in industry. You fortunate wives and mothers here in New Jersey do not realize what we social workers have to face. You will go home tonight to your beautiful homes. Your devoted husbands will come back to you after the day's honest toil. Your children will climb about your knees."

Joyce leaned her cheek against the dry white mist of her fur and thought of her Gam and Cherry. Amelia thought of her three, and of the unborn fourth. Lydia moved her silver bracelet up her left arm as far as it would go, because she had no children.

"You live so sheltered here in this beautiful New Jersey suburb," the speaker continued. "You have everything your hearts desire. Do you know there are girls in New York City, just fifteen miles away, who live in dark hall bedrooms without a ray of sunshine? These girls struggle with poverty in order to keep their virtue. There would be an easy way out for them. They could have sparkling jewels and furs. But they wish to preserve their honor. They prefer to scrub floors or work long hours in a noisy factory. Now, I want to tell one pitiful story about a girl named Pansy."

The speaker's hand was on the hard globes of her necklace. The ladies were listening intently now.

Of course, they would have been shocked if the speaker had adopted a flippant tone. Certain authors had been barred from the Woman's Club on account of a strange airiness concerning such matters. But as long as the speaker kept her voice tragic and used the words "horror" and "betrayer," she was allowed. The president flushed. It was difficult sitting on a platform, where everyone watched you listen. She pretended to examine her right glove, as if nothing that she heard mattered.

Amelia listened, filled with honest pity for the virtuous girls. She thought how noble they were, and she hoped they would be rewarded some day by a good man's love. She—Amelia—was so fortunate. And she had done nothing to deserve this bliss. It had just happened, after she graduated from high school. Her husband was so different from these leering betrayers. She had never seen Joe leer.

Lydia thought how rough Amelia's hand was, fussing with that skunk fur. Poor unintellectual Amelia, with never a vision beyond her household! What did she read? Nothing. What music did she hear? Two-tube radio. What were her convictions about Life? A blank. Lydia had so many convictions. Lydia was not sorry for the world. She was angry at it. She did not approve. She was not amused. There ought to be a law. Why should girls be allowed to ruin themselves? She had sharp thoughts of inflexible lawyers, massive prisons, and fierce policemen darting into hall bedrooms. If only strong-minded women would take hold and influence the legislature! She would rise and move that somebody be sent to the state capitol at Trenton.

Joyce sat with her hands in the pockets of her white wool coat. Under her willowy hat-brim, her eyes were cool and large. She felt neither pity nor wrath, only thoughtful curiosity. There was so much in the world that she had never seen, although she was a wife and mother and supposed to have had all that life can offer. Wifehood and motherhood—what else was there, you know? With her chin deep in the cloud of fur, she wondered about danger. A person couldn't help wondering, no matter how happy she was. . . . . It was troubling to think of unfelt sensations. How did it seem to commit a deadly sin? What was it to have all the experiences? How did a guilt change one's thoughts? Did one go along the street with eyes like other people's eyes? What did a

Joyce woke with home-sickness. "I live somewhere else, somewhere better than this!"

"I tell you, Joy, I've always liked Mrs. Ormsby. She's a brave little woman."

woman think when she had made a wreck of the Ten Commandments? It seemed queer not to know. She was a glacé slipper that has never walked anywhere. Happiness kept her from walking. She felt as if she were peering through a twisted hedge with all the blossoms on this side and all the thorns on the other. She would die and be buried on the blossom side. Well, wasn't she fortunate?

Thoughtfully, she ran the tip of a white-gloved finger along her hat-brim. Through the glove, the straw felt utterly smooth. She considered the girls who worked long hours in a noisy factory. Joyce tried to imagine what she would do if a man ever faced her with an evil smile. She certainly would not threaten to throw herself out of the window, as they did in the drama. . . . . Joyce knew she was thinking nonsense. But it was a pleasure to think nonsense when everyone around was breathing so heavily and looking so solemn.

Joyce unfastened the crystal ball on her purse and slid her fingers in until they found her compact. It was blue enamel with a light glaze, thin and round, a ruby set in the cover. She liked to run her thumb over the ruby. She raised the tiny glass to her eyes. Seeing her absorbed, Lydia sighed. It was too exasperating. Here Joyce Millard was, *looking at herself*, with a burning question on the platform! But what could you expect? Likely she never considered any question more intellectual than lemon or cream with her tea. The man who did miniatures, down in East Orange, said that Joyce had the look of a girl who is gathering plums in a willow basket. She has hung the basket over her arm and she lays the plums down singly, careful not to print the bloom, absorbed and gentle. . . . .

The address on women in industry was over. The audience clapped. With this noisy return of civilization, a certain lurid spell was broken. Everyone stopped thinking whatever she had been thinking the last hour; it vanished with the applause, as desires melt in dreams. Their minds grew firm again. It had been a most informing talk. Girls could not be too careful. What, it's a quarter to six? Those early peaches would be sold by the time one reached the market. Some one said they were green anyhow, not so rosy as they looked. Life seemed a nice little bustle. It did one good to get out occasionally—gave one a new outlook on things. Remember to run into Drury's for a yard of pink ribbon and a spool of No. 60. Stop for the iron and wine.

THE president asked if there were questions. Anyone who put a question this late was considered an enemy of society, because everyone was anxious to get away. It was not only the markets and the bakeries. Their children were being taken care of by women who charged by the hour. Every minute ticked away money . . . . But some one always asked a question.

The club members crouched on the edges of their seats. Already a dozen were tiptoeing down the aisles. The president forbore to ask if there were further questions, although the indefatigable speaker had intimated that she wanted an "open forum." The president looped her silver fox over her arm, and said the motion to adjourn was in order.

Amelia went up, with others, to shake hands with the speaker. Amelia was always one of those who went up to the speakers and thanked them very much. She bought her rolls beforehand, on purpose to have time. This speaker said she was very grateful to Amelia.

Amelia went through the double glass doors, out into the good fresh air. The railway tracks, running through the center of town like a backbone, divided it into two sections—the dollar side and the fifty-cent side. Amelia walked under the bridge, over into the fifty-cent side. She felt tired and depressed, for no reason at all. Perhaps it was her condition. She wondered what it would be like —not to feel tired. She wished Joe and she had a car. The Millards had a car. The Smiths had a car. Her turban felt heavy with all those darn' cherries. Her dress felt tight and out of fashion . . . . Hmmmm, another spring was here. Forsythia in all the yards, like scrambled egg. Pretty flower, but give her chrysanthemums any time. . . . . The shade-trees were in blossom, and their fallen red and yellow flowers made the sidewalk slippery. Amelia remembered how surprised she had been in high-school biology class to learn that shade trees had flowers. She always thought they had—just leaves. There was something a bit embarrassing about trees producing flowers . . . . She hoped nothing had gone wrong this afternoon. When one left two children and a baby, one might find anything. . . . . And then, down the street, she saw the two older ones come running. Never mind the turban. Never mind that she was tired. All was well.

Lydia clicked over the sidewalk with acid heels to the place where her sedan was parked. She jabbed her key viciously into the lock. She started the engine with a roar. The speaker had said there would be no use sending anybody to Trenton. There ought to be a law. Lydia backed her car out of the parking space with such fury that she grazed the fenders of an innocent coupé. She drove straight home, and then remembered, as she shut off her engine, that she had meant to stop at the circulating library. They were holding an H. G. Wells for her, and a Zane Grey for her husband. Well, Seth would have to live without God's country tonight. . . . . The Lanes' forsythia was out. Bourgeois shrub—everybody had forsythia.

JOYCE had told the chauffeur not to call at the club, although that would irritate Clifford. He was proud of the car, rippling to the curb with a panther's dark grace. Henry, in moss-green, always held the door respectfully as if it were a panther's paw, and Joyce stepped in—under the eyes of women whose husbands were not so brainy. Clifford liked her to invite women to ride and "drop" them at their chauffeurless homes. If they did not wait for Henry to open the door, but hopped out single-handed, Clifford said they were not the real thing. He was just terribly pleased at being so rich before he was thirty.

But Joyce wanted to walk home in this green spongy air. She passed the parking space and saw Lydia raging in her sedan. She passed the butcher's matted rabbits, and the druggist's window, draped in purple. She heard the five-forty leave the station with a

stony sound that shook the sidewalks. Brookstone was at the mercy of the trains. Soon the men would overtake her, walking two by two, with evening newspapers under their arms, those devoted husbands the social worker mentioned. She climbed Briar Hill. It was an old street, so the houses were red-brick, heavy with vines. Here in the sunlight they were trembling with birds hidden under the leaves, singing. All day the weather had been dark, but now, quite suddenly, the clouds were dissolved in light. The air was delicate and the colors all candid. Leaves were clear emerald. They moved on the trees like water. Joyce felt the delicious relief one has when a dark day lifts and shows blue at the close. It was as if a doom were postponed, as if an innocent world said: "There's nothing wrong, you restless heart!"

It was a temperate hour, too temperate to be significant. No one was ever gay between five and six at night, unless he had the untroubled gayety of birds singing under the vines. Joyce felt porous, as if all sights and sounds were passing through her body and appearing whole on the other side, leaving no residue to remember. Thoughts did not dovetail with other thoughts and rear up some tower of Babel. One did not attempt to explain life between five and six. Thank God for one hour without wondering . . . . . There was forsythia, tossing its sunny bells under the dark maples. There was a boy with a green balloon, showing it to other boys. The rubber squeaked as he held it. A white kitten was watching a sparrow.

Joyce had a distinct, quiet sense of accepting the yellow bush, the green balloon, the kitten, and the doomed sparrow. She held out her apron for the fruit to fall from the tree.

"She said you were the handsomest man in Brookstone."

Chapter Two

AT the station the black taxies waited on the fifty-cent side, the blue taxies on the dollar side. The six forty-five was late that evening. The crowd grew restless listening for the train. Girls in bright sweaters, with silk handkerchiefs around their heads, strolled up the cinder path. Taxi-drivers said: "Well, the old girl musta broke down." They were resigned, because their dinners were not spoiling. But wives who had driven down to meet their husbands called to each other from their car windows: "My dear, I've got roast beef drying up in the oven. Huldah will never know enough to take it out." . . . . "We're going to a bridge party in Englewood. Imagine when we'll get there!" . . . . "I don't know whether to stay here or go home. I ought to put Junior to bed, but Everett would be furious if he came and found I wasn't here."

A few children, down to meet Daddy, performed feats of strength on an iron railing. A boy in a white-belted suit had a spotted puppy on a string, and a little girl with ferret eyes was daring him to let go the string. Chauffeurs strolled back and forth before their cars, clapping their leather gloves together with an idle, impatient gesture, now and then stopping to prod a tire, discussing a new job, or that Arabian desert picture running at the Bijou.

Not many chauffeurs were meeting this train. Men who could afford chauffeurs usually reached Brookstone on the five-seventeen or at least the six-one. There was social distinction in trains. Generally speaking, if a man came home too early, he was a petty salesman. If he came home too late, he was a slave, afraid of his job. There was social distinction, too, in the way a man went from the station to his home. Lowest in the scale was a walker, unless he walked for his health. Next was he who hired a taxi; either he did not own a car, or his family life was not all it should be, and nobody met him. One step higher came the man whose wife met him in the car—and what kind of a car made all the difference. On society's pinnacle was the chauffeur-driven gentleman. There were exceptions, as in the case where several wives on one street united for efficiency. One wife met all the husbands one week. Another met them the next, and so on. Yes, how and when a man reached home of nights was important—in the suburbs. And how and when he left there in the morning.

It was easy to read a man's prosperity from such signs, and social life in Brookstone was mostly conducted accordingly. But signs did not always hold true, under the surface of the lacquered wave. Ugly shapes rose to the light, like deep-sea creatures showing their snouts. There was so much financial façade. The man whose wife sat behind the wheel of a high-priced motor might be loaded down with a first and a second mortgage. The humble creature who walked might be paying for his home and laying up money besides. The chauffeur-driven gentleman might avoid the butcher's eye. Only at the National Bank was the truth known. At the teller's window, often the first in Brookstone were last, and the last first. The president of the bank had a suspicious nature. He believed the worst of his fellow-men, and no wonder. He had seen Mr. Boyd Stanley, in his pearl-colored spats, begging for another loan. ("God, man, I gotta have money! I gotta!") He knew more about the souls of Brookstone than the minister ever thought of knowing, because a soul in desperate need of money is mother-naked. The cold white walls of his bank heard more confessions than a church. Brookstone was honeycombed by debt, like a beautiful woman with a hidden disease. If credit were withdrawn, the suburb would fall apart, rotten and strengthless at the core.

The clocks in the cars showed twenty minutes past seven. It

was very quiet now at the station, so quiet anyone could hear the trolley over on the fifty-cent side. Wives had subsided with the books or fancy-work they always brought in case the train was late. The children had settled down. The boy with the spotted puppy had let go the string. The taxi-drivers leaned against their fenders, smoking. There was a false peace about the scene, like the false financial peace of Brookstone. No one really was at peace. Everyone was anxious, watching the time. The waiting cars, under the amber glare of the station lamps, were black panthers, crouched down on their paws.

Hark—was that the train? No—only a step on the gravel. Embroider another rose. Turn over another leaf in that novel and learn what *Lady Caroline* said. Have a coffin-nail, buddy?

"God, man, I gotta have money! I gotta!"

A panther coughed and whined. Somebody must have heard the train. The other panthers whined. The taxi-drivers threw away their cigarettes. The train was pounding behind the curve. *Out of the way there, you little people!* No shilly-shallying about tons of steel on the tracks! The black rails glittered; steam hissed; a headlight blazed; the engine swept along the platform, pulling its row of yellow windows, its men hanging to the steps as dark bees hang to a comb. The children, come down to meet Daddy, admired the great wheels. They were the last generation to see steam engines with their hot black bodies and their plumes of smoke bent back before the wind and red fire in their tenders. The next generation would watch electric engines, without humanity, gliding in and out of the station like phantoms, terribly self-possessed. And would they admire those ghosts, with their low chilling sound?

Men swarmed from the steps before the train came to a full stop—a hundred moving coats and hats. But somewhere in the few inches between coat collar and hat-brim was the expected face. All in a moment they melted from the train. The panthers sprang away. The taxicabs filled to the doors. The engine thundered again. And as it thundered, wives on the hills were listening and thinking they could put the chops in now, because Joe was here at last. In Brookstone, one ate and drank, sorrowed and thrilled, according to the time-table. Lovers would be late with their kisses, since the six forty-five came in at half-past seven.

Joe Browning, Clifford Millard and Seth Smith were on this train. Clifford was met by his chauffeur; Joe walked; Seth went up in a taxi. Seth found Lydia at her early-American desk, writing letters in the large hand and the violet ink that she affected nowadays. She did not look up when Seth came in. She never did. She always just started talking, without a glance in his direction. He bent down and kissed the top of her head. Her hair was parted in the middle and drawn down into wheels over her ears.

"I heard the most awful things this afternoon," she said, her pen never pausing in its violet trail over the paper. "I think something should be done, Seth."

Lydia never knew when he was late, never cared whether the meals were on time, except when she was off on one of her diet fads. Just now—thank God—she was not bothering with food, not worrying his life out with roughage. Just now she was mental.

"Dinner!" a Polish voice called from the dining-room. Seth's salary was not large enough for Lydia to keep a competent maid. Maids did not like suburbs, and a competent one could not be lured out for a mere fifteen dollars a week. As Lydia could not pay more, she had a succession of rough diamonds of all nationalities, especially Czecho-Slovak. That new-born republic exported its inhabitants for domestic service at the lowest wages. Sometimes they were "willing" and broke many dishes, because dish-breaking always makes a cheery disposition. Sometimes they were grim and had shooting pains in the legs. Lydia drove even these ineffective serfs to madness by spells of frenzied supervision alternated with spells of strict noninterference. Some days she dogged their heels. Other days she kept aloof and answered their questions with: "You must think that out for yourself, Gizka." So her maids rarely stayed longer than a month.

Therefore, Seth scarcely knew what face would peer of nights from the butler's-pantry door. And he had no time to grow hardened to culinary mistakes before another cook came with a new set of mistakes. Some did chops to a cinder; others left them raw. Some brought singed bread to the breakfast table for toast; others brought it charred. But Seth did not allow this changing policy to worry him. He was actually a happy man. It was good (he thought) to get back to his own little home and his wifey and—and— Well, he had no kiddies.

Over the dinner table tonight (dark mortuary slabs of veal cutlet) Lydia told Seth about the Woman's Club speaker. She was very intense. She was not conscious of eating underdone cutlet. That was her way when she had an intellectual interest. During the spells when she was reading food pages in the magazines, she criticized every bite and described the horrors of acidosis. But this was not one of those nights.

"Couldn't somebody go to Trenton?" she asked.

Seth had learned it was best not to cross Lydia in a hobby, but sometimes he forgot.

"I don't see why anybody should go to Trenton," he said, struggling with his cutlet.

Lydia laid down her fork with a clank.

"*Seth!*" she almost howled. "It's like you to treat all this in your light, vulgar fashion. The fact remains."

The fact remained that Seth was less hardened to life than Lydia. She coolly read things in her modern authors that he could not survive. She read James Joyce without stirring a hair. Seth had retreated in horror from two pages of Joyce. With her friends, Lydia talked on subjects that made her husband's hair curl.

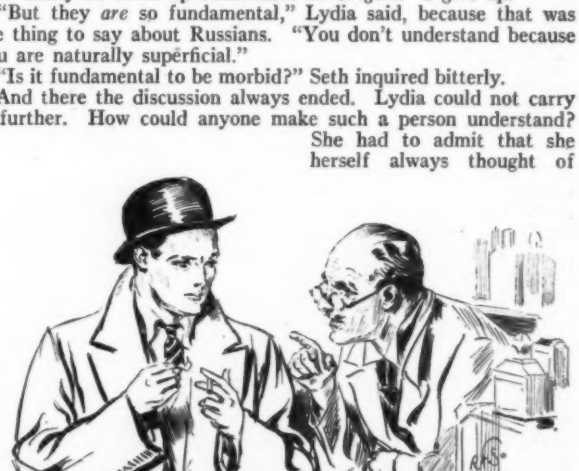
But it was a convention between him and Lydia—a convention they both enjoyed—that he was a great, coarse, passionate creature who must be cleansed by her refining influence. Well, at least she was elevating his low taste in literature. Lydia was not the fan of any one author. In modern literature her favorite was always the author of the moment. In the literature of the past, it was the Russians. Seth had obediently read several moderns to please Lydia. But after a few earnest attempts, he had given up trying to cleave his way through the Russians.

"It's the different names they have," he explained mournfully. "I just can't stand it. I can't keep track of the characters. One minute a man is *Sasha*. Then he's *Satka*. Then he's *Ivanovitch*. And finally he turns up somewhere as *Grigori*. I give up."

"But they *are* so fundamental," Lydia said, because that was the thing to say about Russians. "You don't understand because you are naturally superficial."

"Is it fundamental to be morbid?" Seth inquired bitterly.

And there the discussion always ended. Lydia could not carry it further. How could anyone make such a person understand? She had to admit that she herself always thought of



"I'd have money if the swells paid their bills."

Russia as a place where nobody did anything normal. She could not imagine any Russian riding in a trolley-car, buying thread, or putting down a saucer of milk for a kitten. But as for cowering in corners, brandishing knives, lying prostrate near the Kremlin in a snowstorm—that seemed a part of Russian daily life.

Lydia had been forced, also, to give up educating Seth with the opera. One year she had joined certain other Brookstone wives in buying opera seats for the season. She had dragged Seth in every other Wednesday night. The seats were in the family circle, so Seth always had the sensation of watching the performance from a captive balloon. And Lord, how ugly the female singers were! Take that scene in "Parsifal" where three-hundred-pound flower maidens trotted across the stage. *Parsifal* must have felt he was being lured by a herd of elephants. . . . . During bars of immortal music, Seth would lean over to Lydia and murmur: "Honest—look at that woman!" Lydia would hiss back: "Haven't you any soul? Can't you forget material things, just for a moment?" Then Seth would feel actually ashamed and try to be overwhelmed by the music and roll his eyes when Lydia rolled hers. He would tell himself that he was just a callous brute of a life-insurance salesman, and he should learn to recognize Beauty when he heard it. . . . . Golly, remember those two weeks when Lydia was worked up about Beauty and Truth? He had fairly skulked around the house.

But after a year of operatic effort, Seth rebelled. It was not so much the music, he said. It was that twelve o'clock train. He was tired of coming home on that every other Wednesday night, with Lydia dozing by his side, her cheek against the windowpane. He could never doze off. He was broad awake and saw the faces of the other passengers. People looked so unwashed on a night train. There was the inevitable girl sleeping with her head on a man's shoulder; the inevitable drunk, chumming with the conductor; the jolly four, two wives and two husbands, talking loud enough for everyone to hear, calling each other boys and girls. . . . . Lydia and he never got into the house till one o'clock. A musical comedy was worth all that suffering, he said. But opera—no! Lydia raved, but Seth took heart from the revolt of other Brookstone husbands. Two seasons was the most any man suffered. After that, a wife went with another wife, or gave up opera in this world. Seth thought it was a doggoned shame that opera was considered a sign of culture. It had caused so much agony to the American business man.

Amelia listened, with honest pity for the virtuous girls; she thought how noble they were.

This evening, after dinner, Seth hunted on the console table for "Riders of the Purple Sage." Lydia had promised to bring it home from the drug-store circulating library. He had comfortable hopes of that book and his pipe. Lydia always left him alone when he had a book, except when she read to him passages from her own book.

"Just think!" she would exclaim, looking up from the page. "It says here the majority of Americans have the brains of fourteen-year-old children."

"Gosh!" Seth would murmur, his soul deep in the Arizona desert. He could not complain of Lydia's quoting, because he did the same, when his emotions were too much to bear alone.

"Imagine!" he would exclaim, looking up from his page. "Men have been crucified on cactuses."

"Good gracious!" Lydia would murmur, her soul deep in the mental life of the American people.

But tonight there was no Zane Grey on the console table.

"I'm sorry," Lydia said. "I forgot your book. I wanted H. G. Wells, too. I didn't think till I got way home. I was so mad at that damn' speaker."

Of course Seth could listen to the radio; but he always liked radio music best when he was reading along with it.

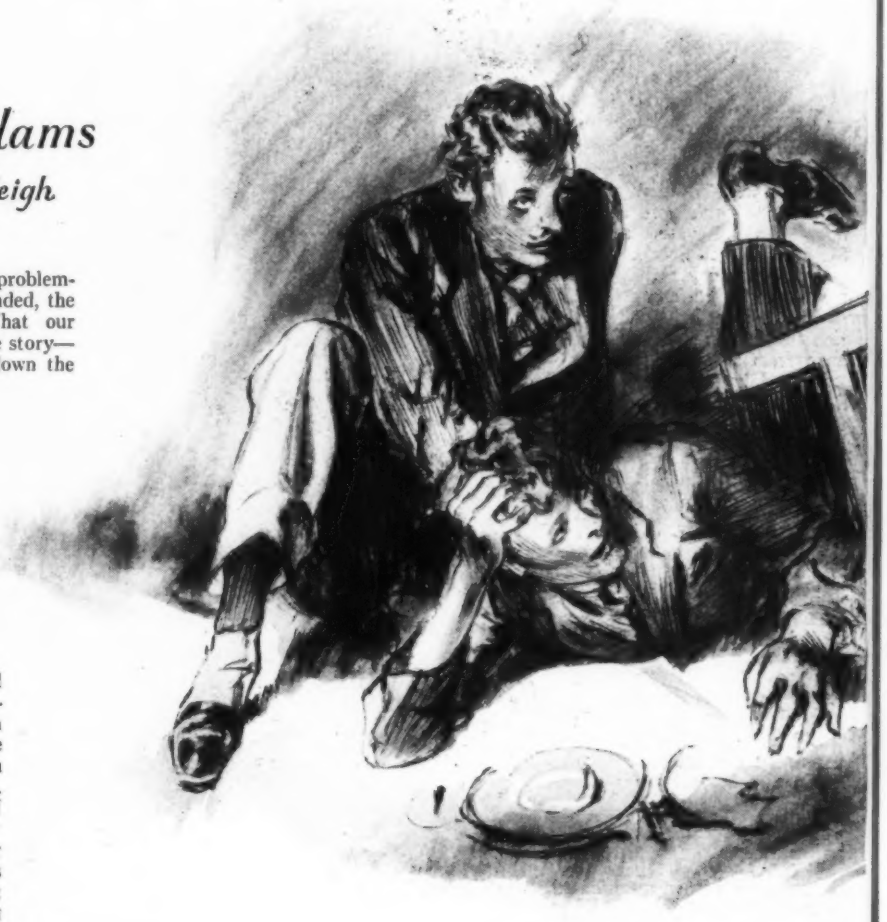
"I'll go downtown and get 'em," he said. "The drug-store's open."

"Couldn't you get along just one *(Please turn to page 122)*

Straight Line Story

by Frank R. Adams

Illustrated by Henry Raleigh



"NEVER mind these here, now, problem-play plots," advised, nay commanded, the supervisor of construction. "What our star, Mr. Wix, does best is the straight line story—something that starts with him walking down the street, and he meets the girl in some novel way like no girl ever got met before, and that makes him forget where he was headed; and the entire yarn moves on from there at about three miles per minute."

The quartet of trained hack-writers at the Bell Studios had heard that speech before. Any one of the four of them could have recited it right back at Mr. MacArtey. Not that one of them would, of course—not unless he had a signed contract with a rival company like Consolidated Merger Productions in his hip pocket, and maybe not even then. You never could tell when or where you'd meet Mr. MacArtey again. People in the motion-picture business shift around so. It's all just like one great big family—of irritated wildcats.

So they lent an apparently attentive ear while their minds roamed at will. Samples dipped at random from aforesaid minds: "Wonder who that new blonde is I saw on Stage Three during the lunch-hour." "If I didn't have to stick around here, I believe I could break eighty this afternoon." "If I ever get to be a director, I'll write my own stories and put 'em on 'as is.'" "I'll tell the world I've got a headache today." "If anybody wants to know whether Marshall Clancy's good-looking script girl will neck, I'll tell 'em, and how."

When Mr. MacArtey had softly closed the door behind him, the four literary gentlemen into whose hands the fashioning of the next Wix epic had been entrusted regarded one another with a distaste born of long association.

"Just a straight line story," drawled Bill Stewart, a Southerner from South Bend, "where the hero walks down the street and meets the girl in some way that no girl has ever been met before. Simple, aint it?"

"The trouble with MacArtey," explained Gaylord Perrill, "is that he hasn't been around very much. If he had, he'd know that girls have been met every way there is."

"You're an authority on that subject, I suppose?" doubted Francis Coe, the lean and hungry-looking member of the quartet. He should have been a critic, not a constructionist.

"The Encyclopædia Britannica," Gay admitted modestly. "I've met 'em on the ice, in the air and under water. If there was any seasonable novelty in encounters, I would undoubtedly have been informed of it."

Ben Peck had nothing to contribute to the symposium of wise-cracks. The others did not know it yet, but Ben had been handed his notice the day before. He was only working on the Wix lot for another week—unless, of course, he should turn in a perfectly marvelous idea; and he wasn't feeling exactly cheerful about it.

He liked it there in the studio. There was an atmosphere of security that contrasted favorably with the buffetings of fortune to which the free-lance writer was exposed. The worst of it was that Ben really had done a lot of first-class work in construction conference. The reason he had not gotten credit for it was that he lacked aggressiveness when the supervisor was around. No one had meant to crowd him to the outside of the track, but in motion-picture construction the man who presents an idea is pretty apt to get the credit for having originated it. Gay Perrill and Bill Stewart were the glib conversationalists of their little sewing-circle. Francis Coe and he were the bees who hummed only with industry. Ben worked best by himself and knew it. The chain-gang method of creation as applied to the making of "talkies" had him at a disadvantage.

She brought the golf-club down —unfortunately, on Ben's head.

Being the true record of what preceded and accompanied the manufacture (for film with all-sound accessories) of the latest romantic sensation of the century

"I think I'll go for a walk around the block," Ben announced after a silence of several minutes had fallen upon the group. "Maybe I'll get an idea."

"Yeah? And maybe you'll meet a beautiful playmate in some new, novel and absolutely original fashion that can be turned into cash at the pay-window!"—from Gay Perrill.

"More apt to meet the supervisor, who'll slip him a blue ticket that can be turned in for a check for payment in full." Stewart added that after the door had closed behind Ben. Stew didn't know that Ben already had his blue ticket.

It was pleasant outside, neither hot nor cold. Ben passed his shabby little coupé, which was parked disconsolately near the studio gate. No use to drive anywhere. Besides, it was silly to waste gasoline. He would be able to think better on his feet. There were no body-squeaks nor fender-rattles when you were walking.

Not that Ben anticipated any fruitful result from thinking. He doubted whether his mind contained any ideas that would satisfy the supervisor even if he could fish them up.

Around the corner was a church. The motion-picture companies often used its doorway in religious shots. Right now an awning stretched from the Gothic portal to the street. There were no cameras or sound-trucks in sight, so Ben deduced that whatever was going on inside was bona-fide and not merely make-believe for the chattering celluloids. There was an organ playing that lock-step by Wagner from which Ben's subconscious mind reconstructed a wedding scene. Clever, these scenario writers! He went further and took time out to be glad that it was not his own wedding. In view of what happened that day it is illuminating and interesting to know that Ben Peck was a confirmed bachelor, had been one for twenty-eight years, and never intended to be anything else. A man ought to know his own mind by that time, if ever.

Around still another corner was the side entrance of the church. Ben turned and went past that too, still entirely unstirred by any salable ideas.

The sound of a door slamming and the swift light patter of feet made him turn around.

Running across the lawn from the side entrance of the church came a girl all in white. The costume seemed especially white, because there was so much of it, including a train and a veil. But the dress would have been striking, no matter what its color, because it was on fire and was trailing smoke and flames in the gentle wind that was blowing in from the Pacific.

It was obviously no time to wait for an introduction. Ben glanced around to see if there was any other help in sight, and then headed across the church lawn himself. They met halfway, and Ben tackled around the knees and threw her to the ground. They rolled over and over together. But that didn't do much good. The material was too flimsy and the fire had too good a start.

The girl was a little frightened. She let out a gasp.

"Easy," counseled Ben, forecasting hysterics. "Don't move around. Just get up and stand still."

She sensed the authority in his tone and did as she was told.

Ben made a swift speculative survey of the situation and yanked off the bridal veil with a sort of an upward sweep that detached it from her head with a minimum of pain and at the same time, or nearly, took hold of the yoke of her gown and ripped it down the back with one motion.

"Now step out of it."

She did, and none of the rest of her clothes were burning at all.

There she was in the sunlight just the way Eve would have dressed had she known about brassières, shorts, chiffon stockings, arm-length gloves and white kid slippers.

"You've got a swell job of tan," Ben observed in the unemotional and impersonal tone of a studio employee, to whom there are no boudoir reticences.

She laughed. "Thanks. But what shall I do now? Do you know any other rough-and-tumble pastimes?"

"I suggest that you return to the church and finish getting married. You are the principal ingredient in the home-brew they're cooking in there, aint you? Go back and do your stuff."

"Dressed like this?"

"I'll bet you never looked so well in your life—blushing that way and everything. Why, you're—you're lovely."

Ben's admiration was so sincere and so devoid of greed that the girl could not find the heart to take offense. Besides, they had just passed through a thrilling moment together, and it was permissible for him to be slightly audacious until he had caught his breath.

And in addition to all that, the young woman doubtless knew that she really was practically the last word in restoratives for lost and impaired vision. So evenly sun-browned that her bare skin did not advertise itself as such, and so youthfully molded that her sex was only suggested, this about-to-be bride was what revue producers go to Hollywood hoping to find. Not that she was exactly beautiful, but she had *élan*, which is just another way of saying that her soul was mounted on springs. This girl's face (which has not been mentioned so far because all girls have obvious faces, and this one was unique in being a midday Godiva) was humorously interesting. She had not been spoiled enough yet to pout, and the curlicues of childhood still persisted around her mouth and eyes. Aside from that, she was a straw blonde and grinned when she smiled. If she had had one front tooth missing, she could have played the stellar rôle in a musical version of "Tom Sawyer."

Behind them the wedding gown disappeared in a final puff of smoke, and the ashes chased themselves away on a laughing wind.

"Thanks for saving the few things that I have left," she said soberly. "The question is, where do I go from here?"

"They don't seem to have missed you yet," Ben pointed out, indicating the church, which still emitted organ-music and nothing else. "You can hurry right back."

"Oh." She was obviously disappointed at his lack of resourcefulness. "And be married in this adagio costume, I suppose?"

"You could change with one of your bridesmaids."

"Your mistake. My bridesmaids are six-footers—the Grenadier Guard is what I call 'em. No. Your ideas of a wedding are entirely too informal. Besides, if the good Lord has seen fit to give me this chance to get away, I'm certainly not going to be fool enough to run right back and stretch out my neck."

"You talk as if you were not particularly anxious to attend this wedding."

"Right. But if I stand around here talking about it much longer, they'll miss me and begin looking. Could you or would you take me somewhere?"

"I've got a car in the next block," Ben mused out loud, "but you can't walk down the street in that costume."

"Yes, I can, if I'm going toward a studio. You've forgotten, for the moment, that this is Hollywood. But I've lived here all my life and I know that none of the natives are ever surprised at anything."

She was quite right. Ben did not know the customs of the country very well. He had only been imported from the East during the last few months. The fact that he had been standing talking to a young woman in unconventional attire for several minutes on a church lawn without attracting the attention of several hundred people practically proved what she said. A few passers-by had given them a casual glance and had looked around for a camera, but had proceeded on their ways even when they saw none.

"I suggest that you return to the church and finish getting married. You are the principal ingredient, aint you?"

"All right. This way," Ben invited, leading in a direction which would bring them to the studio but by a back street where there would be less traffic. He hurried a little to get it over with, but the young woman kept up with him easily with a long and unhampered stride.

At his car he handed her a pull-over sweater that lay at the top of the coupé seat. "Put this on, and no one will notice that you're not completely dressed."

"Thanks."

It proved to be a very becoming sweater, not too awfully loose. The color was navy blue.

Ben started his motor. "Now where?"

"Were you," she asked unsmilingly, "by any chance intending to

pass through New York City on your way to where you're going?"

"Well,"—Ben considered,—"I might do that. Why?"

"Then I'd get off there."

"Why New York?"

"For one thing, I've never been there, and for another I can't think of any place much farther away without getting my imaginary feet wet."

"Don't you think you ought to go home?"

"How did that word *ought* get into this nice, comfortable, old car? No, I don't want to go home. I wont have a chance to think there. They would find me and hustle me right back to that imposing, cruel church. I wonder if I'm the first woman to commit suttee before marriage." The last sentence was half to herself. "If you can spare a little time, will you take me up in the foothills? Maybe on a nearly mountain top I can look down from, and make up my mind what to do."

Ben decided that while technically his time belonged to the story-construction department of Bell Productions, he would actually be doing more good if he helped his present personable company out of the difficulties that she seemed to think she was in.

He headed for the hills. "I live in a shack up in the cañon myself, and I know an eagle's perch just above my place where you'll never be disturbed. But while we're getting there, perhaps it might help if you told me what happened, why and how?"

"What happened," she replied, "was that I must have thought I was wearing my old riding breeches. And I wasn't."

"You mean when you lit your cigarette?"

"Yes."

"But you don't ordinarily smoke."

"No, but I do light matches sometimes. I borrowed a cigarette from the best man and asked everybody to clear out while I waited in the vestry by myself."

"Waited for what?"

"For the ushers to sober up my future lord and master."

"Oh." The idea was extremely distasteful to Ben. Of course he really knew nothing of this colorful young person who sat by his side in such an aura of impersonal detachment, but he resented the tradition that young men should come to their brides in a condition of liquid irresponsibility.

She sensed Ben's aversion. "My future husband has wealth and social position," she informed him. "My only personal asset is a widowed stepmother. She would like me better, if any, after I am married and off her hands."

Ben pieced the various bits of information together. It made an intelligible pattern even if the idea did, upon careful inspection, seem a bit melodramatic. "If we only had a snowstorm," he ventured tentatively.

"I don't blame you." She smiled to show that she appreciated the burlesque. "But truth is often more bromidic than fiction. If I had a few cinders and a grandmother who lived in the woods, I could play almost any one of Grimm's heroines."

"I didn't know," mused Ben, "that modern young women knew anything about fairy tales."

"The answer, in the vernacular, is 'Hell, yes.' I can recite most of 'em standing on my head. I'm especially partial to bear stories. Do you know any good parlor bear stories?"

"Only one," said Ben after a moment's reflection, and some extra special fancy driving around the bends in the upgrade.

"How about pouring it into an attentive ear with the idea of quieting an hysterical young woman and also whiling away the tedium of a long, grueling drive?"

"I couldn't do myself justice," Ben objected, flipping the car to the edge of the road in order to let a descending truck pass. "Besides, we're here."

He turned off the narrow highway into a still narrower double rut that led to a weather-beaten shed.

"Here?" she repeated interrogatively.

"Because we're here," Ben insisted positively. "'Everso' is the name of it."

The girl took it in with one glance. "No place like it," she admitted. "Was your idea to lure me into that wretched den and trifle with my honor?"

"No. I merely thought we might stop long enough to find you a pair of pants before climbing up to the peak yonder."

"Clever idea," the girl concurred. "Darned clever, if I do say it. I hadn't thought of you as a rich man."

"Rich?"

"With two pair, I mean."

"Oh! Suits come that way, if you walk upstairs and save ten dollars." He ushered her through the front door, which was not locked.

"Oh!" she exclaimed.

Obviously she liked the interior.

Ben was rather glad, because he approved of its simplicity himself. Apparently it was all one room with a curtained bunk at one end. The furniture was heavy weathered oak—a table, a bench and four or five chairs—not a silken pillow anywhere and no linen except unbleached curtains at the windows splashed with an Indian red design. They matched the ones around the bunk.

There was a red fireplace too, and at the back a screened porch that had a small cook-stove on it.

Ben wasted no time in showing off his domicile but went to a recessed wardrobe, from which he *(Please turn to page 154)*

The WANDERER'S WAY

A love story of Afghanistan

Illustrated by Arthur E. Becher

"OUR treasure, O Mehmet the Red! What have you done with our treasure?"

"Aye! What happened to the bag of golden Persian *tomans* we lifted from the Ferghana caravan?"

"What became of the gem-studded trinkets the Hindu banker contributed—before his life ebbed crimson to the crimson edge of my sword?"

"And the string of square-cut emeralds we took from the fat Armenian widow-woman—where is it?"

"Where are the rubies and pearls of great price we found on the road to Bokhara?"

"Tell us, O creature!"

So they yelled, queried, bullied,—regardless of the other people, the proper, paunchy, peaceful bazaar traders, who crowded the coffee-house and exchanged shocked, frightened glances,—while Mehmet the Red was embarrassed. He coughed. He blushed. He shuffled his feet. He stroked his fine ruddy beard. He did not know what to reply—except the truth; and this same truth seemed hardly safe to him, as he looked at the five hard, burly men who were facing him.

They were five rogues, five ruffians—five brothers who belonged to the Abakan horde of Siberian Tartars and who had been driven forth from the tents of their tribe. Beady-eyed they were, crooked-mouthed and crooked-brained, brawny to the ankles, blood staining their hands no less than their souls, braggart in their speech, yet brave after the reckless, vain manner of their breed.

Yesterday morning they had arrived here, in Samarkand the Golden, the Grand Khan's glittering, storied capital, eager to spend ill-gotten gains on wine and women and hashish and rich food. For the preceding seven months they had passed most profitably, combing the steppe trails of High Tartary astride their shaggy ponies, naked steel ever on hip, robbing caravans and traveling traders. Knowing each other, they had not trusted each other. So, meeting Mehmet the Red, finding him a kindred spirit, short of temper and long of blade, they had invited him to join them—had made him leader, had chosen him, furthermore, as treasurer, to keep all plunder in his loose breeches, to divide it fairly when they reached town.

This, evidently, had been a mistake, since the Afghan, asked for an accounting, had shown empty pockets.

Therefore, now, the guttural, threatening cries:

"Our money—where is it?"

"Wah! What have you done with it, O father of seventeen piglings?"

Again Mehmet coughed, blushed, shuffled his feet, stroked his beard. Then suddenly, there being nothing else to do, he told them the truth, in three terse words:

"I spent it!"

Eyes blazed. Fingers crooped and curled. Voices peaked shrilly:

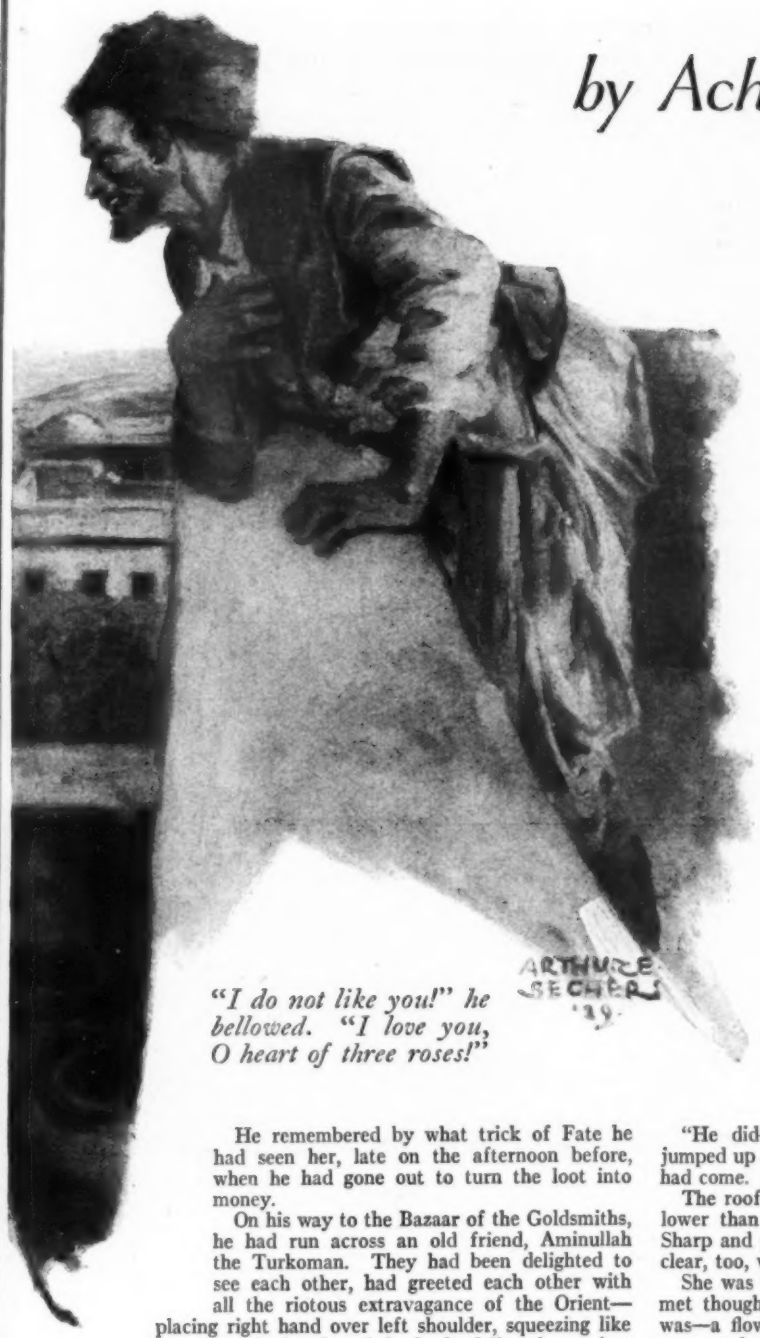
"What?"

"Spent it?"

"Our share as well as yours?"

"Indeed!" Mehmet receded a step, as the five brothers closed in on him. He loosened sword in scabbard. If his life it must be, he would not sell it cheaply. And defiantly, almost triumphantly, he went on: "I spent it on a woman! Allah—what a woman, with her eyes blue as the summer hills, her lips like dusky-red velvet, her hands two slim white butterflies! Allah, Allah—from any angle you look at her, you see beauty, shining as the sun!" . . . .

by Achmed Abdullah



"I do not like you!" he bellowed. "I love you, O heart of three roses!"

He remembered by what trick of Fate he had seen her, late on the afternoon before, when he had gone out to turn the loot into money.

On his way to the Bazaar of the Goldsmiths, he had run across an old friend, Aminullah the Turkoman. They had been delighted to see each other, had greeted each other with all the riotous extravagance of the Orient—placing right hand over left shoulder, squeezing like wrestlers, laying bearded cheek delicately against bearded cheek, blowing loud, smacking kisses into the air.

"Come to my house, O son of the world!" roared Aminullah. "Let us moisten our gullets with honeyed Persian wine and, belike, get pleasantly drunk!"

"Not today. I have business at the bazaar."

Aminullah looked his friend up and down.

"You seem shabby and travel-stained," he said. "Going to buy new clothes?"

"Afterward. First I shall sell—"

"What?"

"Certain jewels which I—ah—picked up here and there, on the highways."

And Afghan winked at Turkoman—who winked back understandingly and suggested that neither bazaar nor jewels would run away, but that good wine might, given the bibbing thievish habits of his slaves; and he drew his arm through the other's and took him to his house, which was quite near. There, for hours, they sat on the flat roof-top, clinking glasses, swapping tales of bravery—and some of these tales were true, though some, alas! were not. And evening came, dropping with the thick, lazy dew of high summer, painting the trees in the garden below a silvery pastel, clothing the flowery bushes with a robe of lemon and pale beryl. . . . . And finally Mehmet announced that he must be going, since soon the bazaar traders would be putting up their shutters.

"Wait!" said Aminullah. "One more bottle!"

He went into the house, while the Afghan leaned back on the heaped pillows.

He had drunk his fill, and a little more than his fill. He was happy. He was at peace with the world. Why, was he not young and strong and rich and ardent?

Wah, he thought, Allah was great; and he laughed contentedly; and all to himself, in his deep basso, he sang a song of the hills:

"The sword—is it sharpened for the blow?
Is it?
Or is it not?
Your mouth—is it meant for the touch of my mouth?
Is it?
Or is it not?
Then why say to me: 'Look not at—'"

All at once he was silent. He listened—as, from not far off, another voice, a woman's soft voice, chimed in:

"Then why say to me: 'Look not at my fair face!'
My eyes—did Allah create them for seeing?
Did He?
Or did He not?"

"He did—by the honor of my teeth!" cried Mehmet. He jumped up and rushed over to the left, whence it seemed the voice had come. He reached the parapet, and looked down.

The roof-top of the next house was directly beneath, a few feet lower than Aminullah's, but adjoining, the outer walls touching. Sharp and clear it lay in the sun's crimson afterglow. Sharp and clear, too, was the outline of the girl who stood there.

She was unveiled. She was very young—perhaps sixteen, Mehmet thought, or seventeen. *Ahee*, he thought—like a dream she was—a flower, a perfume! And impetuously leaning across the parapet, he called down:

"What is your name, O delight?"

She smiled.

"I am Zemzem," she replied.

"A sweet name—sweet as the chittering of birds! By the Book Revealed, O Zemzem, but yours is the fine beauty to the seeing of my eyes!"

Again she smiled. She whispered:

"You like me?"

"I do not like you!" he bellowed. "I"—and his accents were a little thick, since the Persian wine had been potent—"I love you, O heart of three roses! And you—tell me—do you love me?"

"I like you. But—I do not love you!"

"Why not?"

"Because I love another!"

"You will forget this other, once you have kissed my lips, O very small thing!"

A creature of the woods and highways he had been—and now he was a

She gave a low, silvery laugh; then suddenly she was silent—seemed frightened, as up the stairs that led to the inside of the house drifted high-pitched words:

"Yah oudj el-gahss—O countenance of misfortune! O wicked, wicked child, to speak to a strange man!"

The next moment a wizened, white-haired little negress, dressed in youthful and decidedly unbecoming baby-blue, appeared on the roof.

"Wicked, wicked child!" she repeated; and quickly Zemzem ran down the steps, while the old woman shook a fist at Mehmet, yelling: "Begone, O eater of unclean pig's flesh!"

"Kamoosh—silence, O granddaughter of a black and ungainly wart!" was his reply discourteous.

But at once he ducked behind the parapet, as *"Hai!"* rose the negress' shriek, like that of an enraged parrot, and she drew a dagger from her waistshawl, was about to throw it. He laughed—was still laughing when Aminullah returned, a bottle under each arm.

"What is the matter?" demanded the latter.

"I am happy. You see, two seconds earlier I met a girl. . . . . I love her."

"Where did you meet her?" came the astonished query.

"There!" Mehmet pointed at the roof of the adjoining house. "A small, soft girl, with a small, soft name."

"And this name is?"

"Zemzem!"

The other looked up.

"Eh?" he echoed. "Zemzem? And—you love her?"

"I do! And she," the Afghan invented shamelessly, "she loves me! She loves me, she told me, because of my handsome nose, my handsome figure, but chiefly because of my fine red beard! Ah, it appears that she is partial to red beards!" And he did not notice that the Turkoman was plucking at his own beard, which was glossy black. Nor did he notice that the man's eyes were narrowing to slits. "This Zemzem," he continued, "who is she?"

"One of the great ones in the land. Her widowed mother is the sister of the Grand Khan of High Tartary."

Mehmet opened one of the bottles, drank deep, hiccoughed loudly and defiantly.

"By the scarlet pig's bristles," he declared, "let her widowed mother be the sister of the Yellow Emperor of China himself! Let her widowed mother be the aunt of all Allah's blessed winged Angels! And still, being the man I am, shall I take this widowed mother's daughter to wife!" He strutted across the roof. His walk was not very steady.

"I shall call on this widowed sister tonight—now, this very instant!" he added. "I shall say to her—"

"Beware!" came Aminullah's warning.

"Why?"

"Because the Grand Khan's gallows are many!"

Abruptly Mehmet sobered up. The Grand Khan, he knew, was not safe to meddle with—had less regard for human heads than a peasant has for rotten pumpkins. And yet this girl—she had stirred him; he wanted her. . . . . What was he going to do?

And he stood there silent, thinking—then heard the Turkoman's voice:

"I am your friend. And being your friend, I shall help you."

"How?"

"Rabbi ma ighleq bab hataa iheul bab," Aminullah quoted the

man of grand wealth and fashion, a captain in the Grand Khan's service.

ancient proverb. "God does not close one door without opening another."

"Where is this second door?"

"The back door—to Zemzem's palace. And its key is gold—to gild the servants' crooked fingers."

"Being my good friend," asked the Afghan unblushingly,—not choosing to remember the loot in his breeches,—"you will lend me this gold?"

"I would like to. But I am poor."

"What about this grand house, your slaves, your excellent cellars?"

"Mortgaged, every stick and stone!" replied the other—and spoke the truth. "The wine I bought on credit. I have sold most of my slaves. But you—you spoke of jewels you picked up here and there."

"Indeed!" Mehmet reached into his pockets and drew forth a generous handful of gems. They shimmered and glistened in the rays of the dying sun.

The Turkoman's nostrils quivered.

"It may cost you the lot," he suggested.

"What do I care?" exclaimed Mehmet grandiosely. For he was an Afghan of Afghans—hard and greedy one moment, and the next, ready to waste his all for the sake of passion or for a mere whim. Nor did it matter to him that only one-sixth of the plunder was his, the rest belonging to the five Tartar rogues. "Take everything!" he added, pouring the jewels into Aminullah's outstretched hands.

"I shall do what I can," promised the other — and he left the roof, left the house, hurried round the corner to the back door of the adjoining palace.

He whistled —two high notes followed by a fluting tremolo. He waited, repeated the signal; and presently, the old negress came out. She rushed up to him. She hugged him to her breast with all the strength of her withered arms. She pecked at his lips with rapid, tiny, birdlike kisses. "O my king!" she called him and "O my lord!" and *"Yah seikeli rui emin*—O hub of the universe!" Ah, she told him, these nightly visits of his were her only pleasure. For had she not been his mother's slave? And after the latter's death —might her soul enjoy the delights of Paradise!—was it not she who had brought him up? And though, because of poverty, he had been forced to sell her, was she not still and always his chattel, his property?

"Why," she sobbed, "I love you!"

"And I love you, O Murra!" He kissed her very gently, very tenderly.

"Some day," she asked, "you will buy me back? Some day—when your caravan comes in?"

He smiled; he showed her Mehmet's loot.

"How is this," he rejoined, "for a caravan load?"

With clever, practiced eyes and fingers she examined the gems, piece by piece; and it was typical of her that she did not inquire where he had got them.

"They are worth a fortune," she declared. "A splinter of one of these emeralds will buy the brittle bag of bones which is myself. *Ai-yai*—there is enough here and to spare to obtain your heart's dream."

"If my heart's dream still cares for me!"

"What makes you doubt?"

(Please turn to page 130)

The AUCTIONING of MARY ANGEL

A story of the marriage market in America as told by a young girl who was offered, in the market, to the best bidder

by Coningsby Dawson

Illustrated by Joseph Simont

"I WAS in love with your mother years ago," I told her, "when you hadn't been born and the swains who sigh for your beauty were squalling in their cradles."

Mary Angel was not much impressed, but went on with her own story of what had happened in the years since I had known her as a child: "They wrapped me up in silver paper and auctioned me off as a prize-package," she declared.

"If your parents blundered," I protested, "it was through over-anxiety to secure your future. There aren't enough marrying young men to go round. To make one girl supremely more desirable than the rest, some one has to do a lot of dressing. You'll do it, too, if ever you have a daughter."

"I'll be damned if I will." She shot upright. "You ought to write a book about me, quoting me as a horrible example."

To keep her mind off her shipwreck, that is what I am doing.

She told me of her convent upbringing, and then of her all-too-sudden introduction, by her mother, into the fast and fashionable world of the Riviera—of her mother's prompt campaign to secure suitors for her.

"Marriage," she said, "as manipulated by parents, is the most rascally confidence-trick ever perpetrated. I'm out to debunk the world of all the rot that your generation has printed about mine. If youth's flaming today, who set it on fire? Bootlegging, money-crazy papas and mammas. No wonder marriage is on the wane."

She went on to tell me of the various men who made love to her, of the English yachtsman with whom she fell in love—and who suddenly sailed away.

"It wasn't till I'd been home a month that his first letter reached me," she went on. "The main fact it conveyed was that he was already married. His wife hadn't lived with him since the war, yet she refused to divorce him. I was still crazy over him. Ten days before my launching, I cabled him—promised to run off with him, if he'd come and fetch me. . . . . He didn't. . . . . I thought you ought to know; it kind of explains me. So you see I was right in feeling that I was auctioned." *(The story continues in detail:)*

WE had emerged from the Hudson Tunnel and were speeding into the wintry fog which overspread the Jersey meadows, behind which coke-furnaces and electric signs threw up a fantastic glare.

"That wasn't life, Uncle Biff."

Beneath the robe that covered our knees she slipped a cozening hand into mine. It was discreetly gloved. I glanced quickly at the

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chauffeur to assure myself that the angle of his mirror prevented him from spying.

"In a sense it was life." My tone was subdued as a conspirator's. "Life as we imagine it on Christmas Eve, when we prepare for a nonexistent Santa Claus to come down a chimney which is in fact a radiator."

"That's the first chapter," she observed, "in the great unwritten masterpiece entitled, 'The Bunk My Mother Taught Me.' It's one of the many whoppers that grown-ups feed to innocent mites. There is no Santa Claus, and radiators don't have chimneys; so why stuff little minds with falsehoods and leave them to discover it?"

"Because God made us inaccurate human beings and not cash-registers," I chaffed her. "You powder your nose and use lipstick. Your idea is that you make yourself more beautiful. That's what imagination does; it plucks the eyebrows and rouges the cheeks of the commonplace. If decrepit beavers of my years were to cut down dream-beanstalks before spry young Jacks had had a chance to clamber up them, all their days the spry young Jacks would go about moaning that the sky was nothing but clouds."

"The sky *is* nothing but clouds," she refuted me. "Besides, if one takes your sloppy fairy-story at its face-value, all Jack found when he'd climbed his dream-beanstalk was an ogre waiting to devour him. That's what the whole of my generation has found. We're through with dream-beanstalks."

Too late I realized that my illustration had been unfortunate.

"Have it your own way." I became elderly. "Half the world's fun is derived from self-deception. If men hadn't been capable of illusions, the North Pole would never have been discovered."

"And a fat lot of good that did anybody!" she stymied me.

"Take the fiction," I sneaked an unfair advantage, "that you and I are related. Prick the bubble, and what are we?"

"But it wasn't life," she harked back to the musical comedy we had witnessed with its thwarted lovers, atrocious villains and triumphant wedding-bells. "The older I grow, the more I hate lies—especially the blackest lie, that people who marry live happily forever after."

"Aren't you taking our afternoon's clowning too seriously?" I assumed an almost medical attitude.

"I am not. Think of all the beaux with their Janes who have gone home believing that that twaddle was prophetic! The same prophecy is howled at them over the radio; they dance to it, read it in novels, hear it preached in sermons: 'Get married, and heaven on earth will begin.' What tripe! You know it wont. I know it wont. Everybody knows it wont except those who haven't tried. What's the object of luring fresh imbeciles into the same trap, unless it's because we're spiteful?"

Nothing could be gained by continuing this grotesque conversation. So I chuckled: "You're forgetting that I'm a bachelor and therefore an imbecile." After which, having scored a point, I lapsed into silence.

I can often read Mary's mind more clearly when she says nothing. Her face turned from me, she sat staring with wistful envy at the honking scurry of the week-end crowd. Overtaking us as though the highway were a race-track, and shooting into the distance till we could barely distinguish their tail-lights, streamed runabouts overloaded with joy-infected maniacs. In the front seat, as a rule, a blown-about girl sprawled beside a raccoon-coated driver; in the rumble a second couple cuddled inextricably. For a brief moment we glimpsed their impassioned faces. Then they were lost in the gloom of the November night. Mary had forgotten me. She was remembering romantic days when she too had been mauled and embraced.

Our jaunt, despite its auspicious beginning, was ending in failure. I had decided that what she required was to be lifted out of her environment. She had dolled herself up to do me proud at a Saturday matinée.

"Do you recognize it, Uncle Biff?" she had greeted me when I called for her. "It was my going-away plumage."

Thus prompted, I had remembered the tailored costume and tight little hat in which a bare nine months ago I had watched her dash, like a freed bird, from her father's protection to set off on her honeymoon.

"What's the idea?" I had questioned.

"I put it on for you, Uncle Biff, because today's another day when I want so badly to be happy."

We had driven to New York in a mood of bubbling excitement. Wishing to be intensely modern, I had lunched her at a glorified speak-easy, taken her to the most popular show on Broadway and even munched chocolates with her between the acts. I had done my best at over forty to be a college-boy, and had seemed to be succeeding till, on the homeward journey, she had ruined everything by complaining that the play wasn't life. . . . . Still holding my hand and deriving as much pleasure as from grip-

Mary's mother—how often have I entered this sacred building solely to worship her!

ping an umbrella, she had awakened me to bleak facts. There wasn't a Santa Claus, and I wasn't a college-boy. I was her pretence uncle, and she was a deserted wife.

She must have sensed the drop in temperature which her truth-telling had caused me, for she snuggled closer.

"I've been horrid, old darling, after you've tried to be so kind. When you bind up my wounds, I scratch."

"Then scratch, if it relieves your feelings," I babied her. "I'm at your service."

"I sometimes think—" She broke off provocatively.

"I don't believe it."

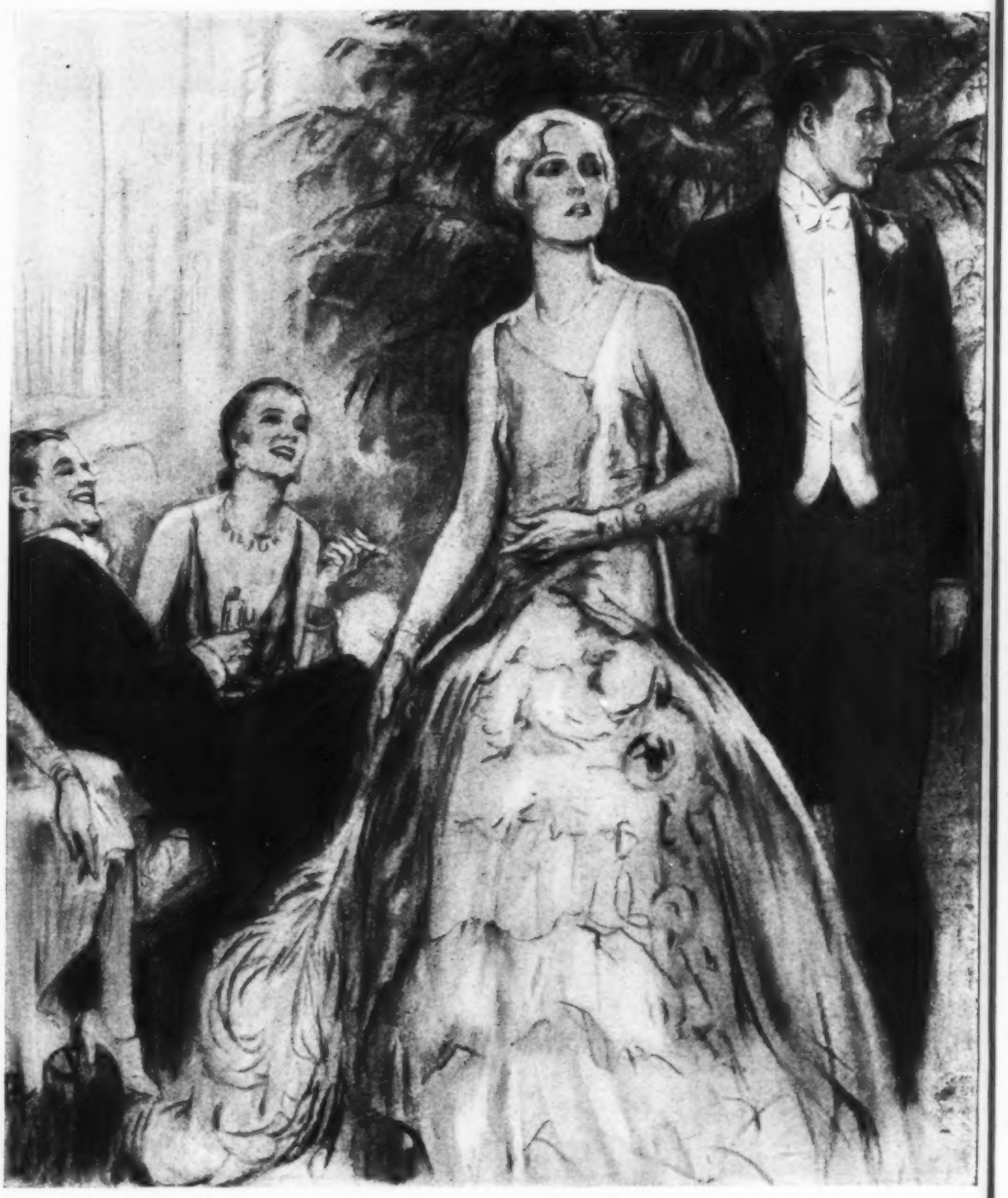
"But I do," she assured me. "On those rare occasions it has occurred to me that you might have made a very useful husband."

"How's that?"

"You get such a kick out of escorting me."

"My dear child,"—and I let go her hand,—"I must be honest. The kick is caused not by you, but by your resemblance to your mother. At your age she used to accompany me to matinées, which was before your father cut me out."

"Well, we wont shed any tears over that," she dismissed my sentiment. "If you two had married, you would have been divorced by now. Even then Mummy knew her onions; she chose a man who was docile."



"I signaled him to rescue me. 'Sorry,' I apolo-

That held me because it wounded.

But if Mary can demolish so brutally the false emotions of an older generation, why is it she can't curb her own follies?

We were passing in silence up the prosperous avenue in which her father has his house. As we drew level with her old domicile, she leaned forward.

"It isn't one bit altered. Mummy doesn't talk to me, so Daddy daren't. Bringing me to my senses, she calls such tactics. I should worry!"

That she did worry became evident; the next moment she was crying. "What have I done?" she sobbed. "I'm so lonely. Seeing people in love has reminded me."

I had intended to bid her good-by without entering her apartment.

"These lily-white hands shall scramble you an egg. If you'll come up, I'll be divine," she tempted me. . . . .

We had left the table for Louisa, the part-time colored maid, to clear on her arrival next morning. In the living-room, with its three dark windows in line, pin-pointed with stars and crawled over by lights of distant automobiles, we were sipping coffee. Everything we employed had been a wedding-gift: the cups from which we drank, the Persian rug beneath our feet, the cigarette-box, the ash-trays. In the silence of my brain I was carrying on an argument. Here was a nest to which everyone who had ever cared for Mary had contributed. Some of the contributions had been extorted by the customary blackmail of sending invitations; but in the main they represented felicitations and affection. No young couple could have started with brighter prospects.

Mary had seemed to be the bride of brides, ethereal and remote, yet ardent and glowing. I shall always remember the strange mixture of longing and innocence with which she lifted her heart-shaped face to the bridegroom's as she left the altar, and the tenderness with which he stooped. Girls marry, I am aware, for a thousand reasons other than love, stretching all the way in baseness from ambition to the gaining of a meal-ticket. Mary Angel could have had any one of a dozen suitors. She still could, were

gized. 'The judge fancied he was a sheik.'"

they certain that the bridegroom's shoes were vacant. But are they?

Not to create a mystery, here is the total of my information. In the spring of the year, before sailing to Europe, my last act was to attend Mary's nuptials. When I returned toward the end of October I was greeted by the scandal that Mary and her husband had separated. I paid a visit to her parents; when her name was mentioned, they betrayed embarrassment and veered off to a safer topic. When I called on Mary, she grinned at me with the defiance of a naughty child:

"So you've come to nose out why Jeff and I have busted?"

"That isn't my purpose," I told her. "I hoped you could use me."

I've had a weak spot for Mary from the moment I first saw her in her cradle. Nothing that she's done or may do could alienate me. Since this is an age when no one believes in pure motives, my frequent visits may lead to my being quoted as co-respondent. I can't help that; my fear is that without companionship she may attempt something desperate. As a grass-widow she's ostracized. My sex are afraid to approach her lest they become compromised; her own are condemning and self-righteous. Her parents' neglect of her has given color to the surmise that she's the guilty party. It's whispered that a young husband of so few months' standing must have discovered something dreadful to walk out on her so finally. All the times she was rumored to have been engaged are recounted, all the boys she played up and then discarded. She was wild—that's the verdict.

And that's why you find me at the susceptible age of forty, sharing my evenings with an unchaperoned child, whose absentee husband might surprise us at any moment. The excuse for my presence is that she's dictating her twenty-one years' experience of life as a social warning. . . . .

"We'd got as far as your coming-out party."

"My auctioning," she corrects me.

"Overstatements of that sort don't win sympathy." I clear my throat judicially. "A coming-out party is the conventional way of introducing a young girl to society."

"How you twist facts!" She pokes the tip of her tongue at me. "It's a way of announcing that her parents are willing to accept bids for ridding their hands of her."

"Rubbish!" I make an effort to restrain my impatience. "There comes a time in every girl's life when she's ripe for courtship. If her parents locked her up, she would smuggle notes to men by servants. By hook or by crook, for better or for worse, she's got to experience passion. If her parents have her interests at heart, they set the stage for her and give her philanderings a decorous appearance. As a rule they're anything but decorous. It's the polite pretense that men make the advances. I'm a man; I know they don't. From start to finish woman is the huntress."

"I'm not denying that." A predatory hand steals out to pacify me.

"Your purpose so far," I face her, "has been to lay the follies of your generation at the door of mine. If I thought you were sufficiently just not to be offended, I'd like to present you with a few facts."

"Of course unpleasant," she grimaces.

"My generation, which is your parents', never floundered into half the messes in which yours bemires itself. We didn't throw up the sponge the moment marriage proved not to be a bed of roses. If we mucked our lives, we had the decency to keep the catastrophe private. And there's another thing we didn't do—I mean our women didn't: when they'd placed a wedding-ring on their finger, they didn't rove about with a questing eye."

"What you're telling me," she interpolates suavely, "is that I'm

promiscuously inclined. You're thinking of what happened this afternoon."

"That partly." I accept her challenge. "It seems to me that young girls of today lack the ability to discriminate. When they select a husband, almost any pair of pants will serve their purpose. They've sampled embraces from so many sources that they've ceased to be fastidious. Suddenly they wake up to the knowledge that the rolling stone gathers no moss—moss being a man who belongs to them exclusively. They become panic-stricken at the prospect of eternal spinsterhood, with the result that they grab at a makeshift, nothing like as eligible as half the suitors they've rejected. They pledge their vows at the altar with mental reservations. 'Till death us do part' is a figure of speech, meaning till tomorrow or the day after in their interpretations of the contract. They set out on their honeymoon fully determined, if their escort doesn't come up to scratch, to swop him for another. They're one flesh only for as long as things run smoothly."

"You're talking about me." She eyes me coldly.

"My dear child," I half apologize, "how can we write your autobiography without discussing you? You're a married woman, yet seeing flappers necking with boys in runabouts makes you envious. You've no right to be envious when you've promised to focus your affection on one man forever."

"Uncle Biff, I could slap you! You ought to wear mittens. You're the most unmodern person. My self-respect demands that I see myself desired. It's the reason I don't go about with holes in my stockings. My mother trained me for one purpose: to kindle desire. I owe a right to myself, the right to be self-expressive. I yearn to rouse men to longing; if I didn't own it, I'd be lying."

"A thief expresses himself," I mumble; "he goes to jail if he's caught."

"Then he squares accounts with the world. He accepts the odds and loses."

We stare at each other. I'm the one who breaks the silence.

"Isn't the fun of loving vastly overrated? To be made untidy and petted by some one to whom you're only a symbol can't be very gratifying. Is flirtation, which commits nobody to anything, worth the trouble?"

"Enormously," she declares shamelessly. "Besides, it isn't a case of whether flirtation is worth the trouble. It's like speeding. You tread on the gas without a thought of accidents. It isn't worth the trouble in order to travel a few miles faster, to be tossed in a ditch with a broken neck. But when you're young, whatever you want at the moment is worth the trouble. That's what being young means; you can't help yourself."

"Being young!" I seize her words. "According to you youth's a disease for which you're not responsible. When you're held accountable for your actions, 'We're young,' you say and think that your seniors, whom you regard as the lowest things that crawl, should feel privileged to foot the damage. To hear you talk one might suppose that no one had ever been young before you."

"Not at all." She smiles slyly. "Heaps of people past forty are as young as I am in spirit. Take yourself, Uncle Biff; you wouldn't be showing all this interest if I were cock-eyed and a hundred."

"You've not answered my question." By displaying sternness I retain my dignity. "If matrimony is a flop, why envy people who are going through all the motions that lead up to it?"

"Because"—she hesitates and gains time by lighting a cigarette—"the motives that actuate a grass-widow or a beau-less maid are the same as those that persuaded poor Eliza to cross the ice. The bloodhounds of loneliness are behind her. Her side of the river isn't promising; the opposite bank isn't promising, either, but it may be an improvement. Taking her happiness in her hands, she leaps to a block of ice, after which she continues hopping from block to block, urged on by the instinct for self-preservation. The drifting blocks in the case of a beau-less maid are boys. The more they sink under her, the faster she hops. *Voilá!*"

I hold up my hand with the omnipotent gesture of a cop arresting traffic.

"You've already stated your opinion of matrimony—that it's a trap for imbeciles. You and I are collaborating. If this account of your exploits isn't to degenerate into a mere hysterical squawk, it's up to me to see that you are logical. If your illustration of unmated females crossing the ice isn't sheer nonsense, it means that the Beulah Land on the further shore is matrimony. Why strive to reach a worse hell than the one from which you're escaping?"

"Gentle Unkie,"—she flirts her fingers over my bald spot,—"it must be awfully difficult for you to get my angle. Your brand of lunacy has been to chuck your

"That's the first chapter in the masterpiece entitled, 'The Bunk My Mother Taught Me.'"

power to love away for the sake of a vain woman who was too big a fool to appreciate you."

"I'm shocked that you should refer to your mother as a vain woman."

"You darling thing!" She melts all over me. "It's simply dear of you to be shocked. All your theories of life are so crooked."

"Then here's your chance to straighten them." I speak crossly. "Criticizing gets the world nowhere. If you uproot and don't replant, you make a desert. Be constructive."

"I will." She glints at me mischievously. "Marriage, as people of your age have managed it, is disgustingly mercenary. Girls ought not to be forced to catch a boy, whether they want him or not, in order to spare their parents' bank-account."

"I don't agree with your implied assertion; but how to avoid it?"

"Girls ought to be brought up like men, expecting to gain their own livings and to be independent."

"So that after they've become wives they may still gain their own livings. Is that the goal at which you're driving?"

"It would be heaps more respectable."

"Then who would run the home and have the babies? Or would you sit on a perch and do without babies?"

"Goodness knows! Husbands couldn't have the babies; that's certain. Since the spread of apartment-houses, babies in wholesale quantities are going out of fashion. One has to keep pace with the times."

"Keeping pace with the times, if I interpret you aright, means race suicide."

She hypnotizes me with a glance. Before she speaks, I know she has cornered me.

"Now then, Unkie, as a bachelor, that's one greenhouse at which you ought not to fling stones. The important thing in marriage is to make a proper start. Later one's bound to run on the rocks—so why sooner? The first quarrels in married life have to do with money. They could be postponed, at any rate, if the wife were self-supporting. Let's begin our reforms with a wage-earning wife. How does that strike you?" The absence of applause irritates her. "No system could be more putrid than the present one," she finishes glumly.

I assume a pontifical air. I realize now that it was unwarranted in the light of her later confessions.

"The trouble with you young people,"—I wag a finger at her—"is that you start your reforms at the wrong end. You can't reform nature. Nature insists on your having babies. Nature insists on your marrying. Nature's endowed you with the passion to be creative. And here's another fact worthy of your attention: Nature's centuries older than we are."

"Darling, this is all news to me."

"Whether it is news to you or not,"—I grow a trifle hot,—"the kind of marriage you propose is no loftier than free love. A sterile wife who's financially independent is no better than a mistress."

"I don't intend to marry, Alec, because my heart is broken."

"How do you mean better?" she asks.

"Free love's an experiment." I explain. "Because it's free, there's nothing binding. At the first difference of opinion, either party walks. The duration of common liking is the period set for faithfulness. Directly one of the contracting parties acquires a taste for some new person—."

"Jumping Jerusalem!" she attempts to halt me. "Who's being cynical?"

"And then what becomes of the other contracting party?" I persist. "If there are babies, what becomes of them? They go to a state institution, I suppose, the way they do in Russia, to be dehumanized."

"Stop." She kicks my shin with her pointed slipper. "What cheek it is of you to think you can instruct me! I'm married; you're only a bachelor. I'm infinitely better informed how men and women grow to hate each other and yet can't do without each other. That's the bungle."

"Then why blame your bringing up, which means my generation, for a bungle which dates back to Eden?"

"I don't—entirely. I blame my *(Please turn to page 159)*

by
Phyllis
Duganne

Illustrated by
Marshall Frantz

No Such Person

The story of a woman whose arms were opened wide to give — and who found them filled instead

MICHELANGELO FRATELLI radiated joy; scattered notes of grand opera surged into his throat and escaped uncontrollably through his full red lips as he entered the garden. It was true that the Signor was not two days dead, and he had loved and truly mourned the Signor. But the sunshine lay golden upon Fiesole; the wind from the mountains tempered its burning—and the postman had just given him a letter for the young Signora.

He could see her now, through the open window of the villa, her oval face pale and solemn beneath the halo of her golden hair. She was packing, sorting the books and papers of the Signor her father, into orderly piles and binding each with string before she tucked it into the open trunk. Michelangelo paused, and for a few lazy moments watched her adoringly. She was an angel, the Signora, and he was her abject slave. If he could be sure that the withholding of this letter in his hand would keep her longer in Fiesole, he would tear it, this instant, into a thousand fragments!

He shook his curly head. No, the Signora's vigil of eight long months was ended, and letter or no letter, she would return to that America and that unknown signor her husband, whose very existence made Michelangelo's heart contract with jealous fury. The letter, of course, was from him, and the Signora's face would brighten as though many candles had been lighted about her head when he, Michelangelo Fratelli, gave it to her. She would smile upon him with her wistful red lips, and say, *"Grazie, Michelangelo,"* in her angel's voice.

With the air of one who has forded dangerous rivers and climbed jagged mountains, conquered enemies and withstood unendurable hardships, Michelangelo entered the villa and offered the letter to her. Triumphant, yet withal modest.

Mona Barrie took the letter from his hand.

"Grazie, Michelangelo," she murmured, but she did not smile. He waited, but there was no further movement of her soft lips, no invisible candles shedding their light upon her face. She merely stood

His face went white. "It never occurred to me, Mona, that you were the sort of woman who would hold a man against his will."

holding the letter as if she did not quite know what to do with it. Then her gray eyes lifted to his with a look of grave surprise. "*Grazie, Michelangelo,*" she repeated, clearly dismissing him.

He bowed, astonished and a little crestfallen, and retreated to the garden, where he resumed his position outside her window and continued to watch her.

The Signora stood still, holding the letter and doing nothing. After a few moments the voice of Angelina, singing in the kitchen at the other end of the villa, distracted his attention. Michelangelo's brown eyes rolled dramatically in the direction of the sound, rolled back to contemplate the surprising rigidity of the Signora. Angelina trilled deliciously; he shrugged and plucked a rose for her from the Signora's favorite bush and strolled toward the kitchen.

Mona Barrie was trembling, standing with her husband's letter in her hand. There was no reason, she kept telling herself monotonously over and over, for her to be afraid. No reason. . . . . *Premonition!* The word leaped into her brain and wedged there, like a stone flung into soft cement.

"I'm silly," she told herself in the flat, unconvinced voice of a frightened child.

Premonition! She *was* silly. If there were such things as forewarnings, wouldn't she have known, two days ago, that her father's hour had come at last? She drew a long breath, and the smile for which Michelangelo had waited in vain fluttered uncertainly across her lips like the meaningless smile of a young baby.

"So silly," she said encouragingly, and tore open the envelope and withdrew the single sheet of letter it contained.

But her knees were shaking, and she sat down to read it:

> Dear Mona: I am telling you this almost the moment I know it. I am in love with some one else. Her name is Anne Carr, and we want to be married. Would you care to stay in Europe and get a divorce there, or what would you prefer? I can't seem to write any more than this now, but you will understand. I don't want you to be unhappy, Mona. Let me know about your father.
>
> DONALD.

"Yes," said Mona Barrie, faintly. "Oh, yes!"

Of course it hadn't been a premonition. She had always known things about Donald before he knew them himself. With the first mention of that name Anne Carr, three months ago, she had known. There had been something in the very manner his pen formed the letters which spelled it that had warned her.

She spoke aloud; it was necessary for her to hear her words to comprehend their meaning, above the confused roaring in her head.

"Donald wants to marry some one—Anne Carr. I've never even seen her. And I love Donald." She stared at his letter. "Eight months. I haven't seen him for eight months. That's nearly a year. And we've been married six."

She put the letter back into the envelope.

Of course Donald hadn't known, when he wrote this, that her father was already dead. It had taken so long—too long. And Donald didn't want her to be unhappy. That, of course, was insane! He was quite crazy, to say that. Probably he didn't want her to be unhappy. But to *say* it! Like that!

She closed her eyes tightly and held her breath. Trying to follow one single thought was like attempting to watch an individual flake in a snowstorm: Donald wanted to marry some one else. That was it. She said the words, inside her head, and then aloud, making of them tangible sound-waves in the actual atmosphere of this Italian hillside. She wrote them and gazed at the unmistakable reality of black lead upon white paper. *Donald wants to marry some one else.* She seized his letter from the envelope, half hysterically, and spread the sheet before her on the table, to see it again in his own hand.

Her name is Anne Carr, and we want to be married.

Still it didn't make sense. And how could it? She and Donald were *married!* Six years, and the thousand things they knew of one another, six years and home, the house which they had built for themselves together, six years that were the only years she had really lived, proved that.

"Why—I can't remember—" she began aloud, and paused, staring wide-eyed into the sunny garden.

She couldn't remember with any conviction now the time when she had not been married to Donald! Yet there had been nineteen

years before it. Nineteen years become almost as obscure and mysterious as the nine months she had lain beneath her mother's heart, as the eternities in which she had not existed at all. And Donald could speak of divorce! It wouldn't be like death, to be divorced from Donald. Death had sense to it, a definite form and outline. It would be like entering another dimension altogether to live in the same world with a Donald who was not her husband.

For an instant she felt faint, dizzied, as though the air of this Donald-less world were too rare for her to breathe and live. Then she drew herself up, shivering, and managed a breathless sort of laugh. It was too fantastic to consider. Donald must be joking, even a little mad. There was no sense in trying to believe it, in taking this letter of his seriously. She had already cabled him of her father's death, cabled that she was sailing home on Saturday. She'd simply sail and go home to Donald! There was no alternative. And Anne Carr. She shook her head decidedly. There simply couldn't be any such person as Anne Carr. . . . .

Across all the trackless breadth of the surging spring Atlantic, Mona Barrie denied Anne Carr. She sat back in her steamer-chair and made plans that held no place for such a being. Life for herself and Donald was going to be a very different thing now. The five thousand dollars a year which her father had found barely adequate to his needs was hers now—and it was exactly twice Donald's salary from the University.

Money, Mona had said, when she married her young professor, six years before, did not matter. And money, their friends, looking upon the pleasantness of their tiny New York apartment, upon the graciousness of the Connecticut house which Donald Barrie had builded with his own two hands, continued not to matter, with such as they.

Of course they had had no children. . . . .

Mona Barrie's gray eyes shone so luminously that the fear within them was barely visible. Now they could have children, Donald and herself! Children, and a car, and all the books that Donald wanted. And *children*. . . . .

There wasn't any Anne Carr.

So the sea-days passed, tenuous hours of suspended reality. Behind lay Italy, and her eight months' vigil there was already condensed into a single memory, timeless, phantasmic: When-I-was-in-Fiesole. Ahead there was Donald—only Donald.

There appeared at last on the monotonous water the same signs which had greeted Columbus, seaweed and driftwood and winging gulls. Then the signs of the newer age, shipping, in craft that grew steadily smaller and smaller as the land came nearer. Nantucket Lightship and the shore of Long Island. The harbor of New York.

Crowded against the ship's rail, her littleness hidden by broad shoulders and bosoms of other passengers, Mona watched the pier slide closer until she could make out Donald's face among the other faces there—until, to her eager eyes, there was only one face in that pattern of pinkish-white ovals turned toward the boat.

Donald Barrie was not engulfed by a crowd. Head and shoulders above the rest of them he stood, his red hair hidden by a new felt hat, his blue eyes squinted against the morning sunlight. A strange suit, a strange necktie; yet beneath the outer changes of eight months must stand her own unchanging Donald.

They met quietly. Mona lifted her face for his kiss, and when his lips brushed her cheek awkwardly, she smiled, a little dizzied by his nearness after so many months, and drew his head firmly down and kissed his mouth.

"Don't be silly, Donald," she said. She was his wife, and there was no such person as Anne Carr.

His face was grave as he looked down at her.

Mona chattered—about the passage, about her departure from Fiesole, about Michelangelo Fratelli's Italian despair when she left. Donald listened quietly. In the taxi, after he had given the driver their address, he looked at her curiously.

"You got my letter, Mona?"

"Oh, yes," she answered carelessly, and reached out and patted his hand. That letter! He was silent, and she spoke, rather too vivaciously. "Oh, it's good to be at home again! *Dear* New York!"

Donald Barrie said nothing.

The cab stopped, and he helped her out. Theirs was a basement apartment, and Mona ran lightly down the three familiar steps and waited before the grilled gate for Donald to unlock it. In the dimness of the hall she stumbled against a wooden box and looked back at him inquiringly.

"Some of my books," he said quietly. "I've taken a room up near the University."

"Oh," Mona commented, as though that were a matter of profound unimportance. She entered the sunny living-room. "My, it's hot here!"

Her husband moved past her and opened the doors that led into the backyard garden. Then he turned and looked at her.

"I'm having lunch with Anne, Mona," he said. "I thought perhaps you'd dine with me tonight." His voice was matter-of-fact, but his fingers gripped the edge of the door so fiercely that the knuckles shone white.

Mona Barrie took off her hat, and sunlight caught in the bright mass of her hair and settled there. She looked at her husband oddly, but for a moment she said nothing. Anne, she was thinking. Anne Carr!

Donald's face was almost expressionless as he met her veiled eyes. "Don't make it any harder than you have to, Mona," he said. "It's not—easy."

"No," she agreed. "No." And suddenly she felt sorry for Donald.

Poor darling, she shouldn't have left him for eight months, father or no father! Or she should have sent for him, insisted that he join her in Fiesole. Indirectly she was to blame for all this. Her eyes grew very tender. Poor, poor Donald! He didn't know that everything was going to be all right. He didn't know, as she did, that there was no such person as Anne Carr!

"There isn't much to say, really," he murmured. "Things—happen. But I want to know that you'll be all right and—everything like that."

Mona sat down. "Don, there's no sense in our trying to talk until I've met Anne," she said quietly. "You wrote me all that you have to say. You wrote me that you were in love with her and wanted to marry her." She made a question of it, looking up at him with brows arched indulgently.

"Yes," said Donald, still gripping the door.

"Well, then!" she said, almost as though she had scored a triumph. "But you don't expect me to let you go without—without *knowing*, do you?"

From his expression, she could see that he had expected just that. "But, Mona—knowing *what?*" he asked.

"Do you think that's unfair of me?" she returned. "After all, you've been my husband for six years, Don. Should I give you

Mona stood up. "I can't stand any more of this," she said. "You'd better go home now, Anne."

up without knowing to what you're going?" Her lips stirred in a faint smile. "I'm *interested* in you, Don! I have a sort of responsibility!"

His face set. "You talk as if I were a child!" he said harshly.

"I'm sorry," she apologized, and held back her smile. Of course she did! He was a child, this man who was her husband! Only a child could think that he could run away so. But she mustn't let him know that she thought so. In fact, she decided abruptly, there was no need for Donald to know anything! The knowledge must lie between herself and this Anne.

He was watching her closely. "What are you thinking, Mona?" he demanded.

"Um," she said, and gazed up at him reflectively. "You run along, Don. I'm hot and tired. Have your lunch and— D'you have to go to the University this afternoon?"

"Yes," he said, looking at her distrustfully.

She caught her lip with her upper teeth. "Why don't we have dinner here? Bring Anne."

Her husband frowned. "I don't see what you're driving at, Mona. Why—"

She interrupted him flatly: "Donald, you've told me that you want to marry this girl?"

It was again a question. "Yes," he answered.

"Unless you go in for bigamy, you can't marry her until I divorce you, can you?" Her voice was soft and very clear.

Donald Barrie's face went white. "It never occurred to me, Mona, that you were the sort of woman who would try to hold a man against his will. I thought I knew you. Possibly I was mistaken."

If he had expected her to flinch, he was disappointed. She merely smiled. "Don't let's be angry, you and I, Don," she said. "All that I'm asking is to know—my successor."

He was the one who winced, at that.

"Don!" she cried compassionately, and went to his side. "Dear, silly Don, I want you to be happy! Don't you know that?"

This was even worse. His eyes fell before the softness of his wife's gaze. For an instant he realized the safety that lay in anger. Then he looked up at her.

"Excuse me, Mona," he said politely.

She moved toward the door. "Dinner at seven?"

"Seven," repeated her husband, and went out.

Mona leaned for an instant against the closed door. Donald! Darling Don! She wanted him in her arms, wanted to strain him and crush him to her, great lanky Donald who was such a baby, after all. She smiled tolerantly. Silly Donald! How could he believe that their marriage could end? But he was a man, and men were stupid. The Anne girl would be able to see, to understand.

She hummed, as she moved about her apartment, straightening rugs and pictures, setting back furniture which had strayed from its proper place in eight long months. She bathed and went out, and as she went from one familiar shop to the next, chatting with her butcher, her grocer, her florist, the eight months seemed wiped away entirely.

When she returned, a girl was sitting on the brownstone railing before the basement entrance of her apartment, a young, slim girl, with a red beret pulled down over short fair hair. Mona knew, without knowing why, and she trembled. "Good Lord," she thought, "if I were ten years older, she could be my daughter!"

"You're Anne Carr," she said simply.

The girl looked abruptly up, and her breath caught; color surged into her young cheeks and retreated. "You're—Mona!"

"Yes." Donald Barrie's wife stood smiling calmly. "Come on in and we'll make some tea. When's Don coming?"

Again the girl, Anne Carr, caught her breath before she spoke. "Not until s-seven. I'm to meet him here. He d-doesn't know—"

"I'm glad you came early," said Mona. She led the way through the dim hall into the living-room; yet she knew that of the two she was the more excited, the more bewildered. This was Anne Carr!

Mona was realizing, for the first time, that until this moment she had never really thought of herself as—well, as grown-up! She had been a girl, a girl like this one here, when she married Don; and somehow, perhaps because she had no children growing up to remind her— She was almost twenty-six!

She took off her hat and set it down on the table, turned and faced Anne Carr.

"Don didn't tell me that you were so pretty!" the girl blurted. Then she flushed, and her frank gray eyes sought Mona's. "He said you were pretty, but—"

Mona smiled reassuringly, but she felt a thousand years old. Across the room hung an oblong mirror, and for an instant she stared at the two reflections caught within its dull gold frame. Two women, straight and slender and fair, yet the one still colt-like, immature.

"Here, put these in a vase," said Mona briskly, "and I'll start the teakettle." She handed Anne Carr the conical sheaf of florist's paper.

"Shall I get the teacups?" asked Anne like a helpful child.

Mona had to steady her voice before she could answer. "Please."

They sat down beside the table, and Mona poured tea.

"I'm—I'm glad you'll let me talk with you," said Anne.

"Silly!" Mona said, indulgently, and she marveled that the girl could not hear her pounding heart. This was Anne Carr!

"I didn't—know about you—when I first met Donald," Anne faltered. She flushed. "It wasn't that he didn't want me to," she defended him quickly. "But we didn't realize that—"

Mona cut her short. "Of course. I understand."

Anne Carr had pulled off her beret and her fair hair was straight and short like a boy's. Her skirt and sweater were pale brown in color, and she wore brown oxfords, like a schoolgirl.

"How old are you, Anne?" Mona asked.

The girl's face tensed. "I'll be twenty in December," she said defiantly. It was May; and in spite of herself Mona smiled. "You needn't think—"

"I was nineteen when I married Don," remarked Mona dryly.

The girl looked at her curiously. "Did you—love him very much?" she asked in a soft little voice.

Mona Barrie smiled. "I still do, my dear."

Immaturity left the girl's face, and her eyes met Mona's unflinchingly. "I love him more than anything in this world," she announced. She hesitated for only a second. "And he loves me," she said proudly.

Mona felt as though she were turning to ice, but her voice sounded calm and natural. "I like you, Anne," she said.

The girl flushed. "Of course I *want* you to like me," she answered. "If we both love Don, we *ought* to like each other. We both ought to want him to be happy."

"I think we do," replied Mona, and poured herself a second cup of tea. She did like this girl, with her straightforwardness and honesty. She was sorry for her. "Anne," she asked, "have you any money of your own?"

The girl's eyes narrowed in surprise. Straightforward she was, but she loved Donald Barrie, and she did not trust too implicitly the woman who was his wife.

"What do you mean?"

Seven more years of poise made Mona's answering laugh sound genuine. "I suppose I'm a little like the old-fashioned parent asking a suitor his qualifications," she suggested, smiling.

Anne considered, then seemed to accept the explanation. "I'm a private secretary," she answered. "I get thirty a week."

"But that would stop—if you married Don," murmured Mona.

"I sha'n't stop working—when I marry Don," said Anne.

Mona sighed. "That seems a—drab future," she said.

"Drab!" The girl laughed scornfully. "To be with Don!"

"If you love him, wont you want his children?" Mona asked.

"You say that?" The young eyes were hard.

"I'm the one who *can* say it. I *know!*"

"Well?" Anne Carr challenged.

Mona leaned back in her chair, eyes on the girl's defiant face. "Don and I have lived for six years on his salary," she said slowly. "It wasn't easy. At my father's death, his income reverted to me. It's only five thousand a year—but that's double what we've had." She paused.

Perhaps Anne Carr was too young to see the tragedy in that. She was fighting for herself. Her chin went up, recklessly, and she looked straight at Donald Barrie's wife.

"Do you think," she demanded bluntly, "that Don would rather have five thousand more a year than me?"

Mona rose from her chair, and for an instant her small white hands clenched into fists. Then she sat down. Anne Carr was watching her relentlessly.

"We're very civilized, aren't we?" said Mona at last, in a controlled, brittle voice. "Will you have more tea?"

"No, thank you." Anne's eyes did not leave the older woman's face; she wasn't even pretending an interest in tea.

Mona spoke deliberately. "Anne, you and Don will have to make me believe that he isn't my man," she said. "You see, I *know* that I love him more than you do! And I honestly don't believe that he loves you more than he loves me!"

The girl stared incredulously. "Why—you're crazy!" she gasped.

"No, I think I'm not crazy," Mona contradicted calmly. "And I tell you now that I haven't gone through those six lean years to give Don up just when there's peace and fulfillment ahead."

The girl's eyes widened.

"I thought you said you loved him!" she cried contemptuously. "You're thinking only of yourself!"

"That's not true," said Mona without anger. "Are you quite sure it isn't true of yourself, Anne?"

"But I can make him *happy!*" Anne cried. "He *wants* me!"

"What do you know of happiness?" asked Mona.

Anne Carr smiled for the first time, a slow, remembering smile, and Mona watched it, fascinated. She did know something of happiness, this slim, determined girl! And Mona spoke again quickly, forestalling an answer from her.

"Anne, we might just as well put all our cards on the table. We both love Don, and we're both going to fight for him. Let's at least fight fair."

"What fighting can there be?" the girl demanded scornfully. "Let Don decide!"

"No!" said Mona, flatly. "Don's a baby. It's between you and me."

Anne Carr looked at Don's wife earnestly. "Don loves me, and I love him," she said. "I'll do everything in my power to make him happy. I promise you that. Everything—"

Mona was not listening. Outside, the Jefferson Market clock was striking five; in two hours Donald Barrie would be here, between them. She thought of the tea-gown she had planned to wear for dinner, the hyacinth blue gown she had brought from Italy. She looked like a Botticelli in it. She lifted her eyes to Anne Carr's brown sweater. Fight fair, she had said. Fair! What had she meant? What fairness could there be between them?

"Oh, I don't know—" she said. She looked at the girl bewilderedly. "Perhaps—perhaps when I see you and Don together—It's all so strange—" She stood up decidedly. There was nothing more that they could say, now. "Let's start dinner," she suggested briskly. "D'you like to cook?"

Anne Carr hesitated a moment; then she accepted the older woman's mood. "Love it," she answered. "Don says you're a marvelous cook. He was telling me about—"

For two hours they worked together and talked like any two women friends; at times, even, Mona found herself forgetting that they were not. She and Don had always liked the same people.

The decision, she had said so confidently, was between herself and Anne Carr. Yet when Donald Barrie rang the doorbell, their conversation died midway, and they looked at one another measuringly for an instant.

"Will you go?" Mona asked. "I don't want to leave this sauce."

She stood beside the stove, her slenderness enveloped in a pink-and-white checked apron, stirring absently, holding her breath.

Don's voice: "Why, hello—here already?"

And Anne Carr, a little tremulous: "Hello. I was early."

A moment's silence, while Mona wondered dully if Don were kissing Anne Carr.

Then: "Hi, Mona!"

So many times he had called, so.

"Hi!" she answered.

He came to the door of the kitchenette and stood looking at her silently.

"I like your Anne," she told him.

He smiled, but made no comment. "Can I help?" he asked at last.

There was a queer formality in their voices, the stilted quality of play-actors. Donald cracked ice and handed the glass bowl to Anne Carr as impersonally as if they were butler and maid. Three pairs of eyes sent speculative glances from one face to another. Triangle, thought Mona. Like the inevitable three in a French farce, they sat down to their melons.

Donald put down his spoon and suddenly chuckled. Anne and Mona regarded him questioningly.

"It *is* rather absurd," he answered the two pairs of gray eyes. "I suppose you realize that you look enough alike to be sisters!"

Mona lowered her lashes swiftly. Fight fair, she had told Anne Carr. Were all women cats at heart? *(Please turn to page 104)*

DOROTHY CANFIELD

is famous for an understanding of family relations—of the essentials of living in American homes—which has endeared her to millions of people. The same splendid qualities of feeling and thought which made great "The Bent Twig" and "A Son's Wife" distinguish an interesting article by her which we will publish next month. Be sure to read it.

The husband advanced wildly. The attack was no less dangerous for that reason.

He Lied Like A Gentleman

by Donald Barr Chidsey

Illustrated by Loren Wilford

THE blade in front of him was disconcertingly swift, alert. René D'Acosta felt no fear, for this was not his first affair; and never, on the field or at the academy, had he met his equal. Still, one would not have supposed that this particular husband, short, a bit thick, slow-witted in conversation, could move with such speed.

The weapons slithered together sweetly, making the only sound in that remote place. It was light enough for fighting; yet the sun was not above the trees, and the one thing René had feared—dew on the grass—was pleasantly absent.

The husband beat René's blade with a jerky nervousness. He advanced, his feet moving in tiny catlike steps. He half-lunged.

A feint; a mere feeler. René did not even recognize it. René was troubled about something quite different. He could not keep his mind properly attentive, for he was laughing to himself, and at the same time scowling, about this whole business. What a farce it was! So many husbands he had taunted, so often he had chuckled at them behind their backs, that now, to be meeting one on the field, was at once amusing and annoying. Amusing because of the fellow's ponderous dignity, his preposterous ideas of honor. But annoying because, after all, Eleanor had rejected him.

Eleanor had rejected him. That stung. Complacently he had come to think that no woman would turn him away, once he had spread before her all his charms. His dignity was hurt no less than the husband's—although he hoped, even while he fought, that he looked less ridiculous.

And there was the farce! Many times men had accused René—accused him to his face. Invariably he had lied about it. That was what a gentleman should do. To be sure, he had lied in such a way that the husband knew he was lying. But he *had* lied.

He had lied about Eleanor too. But it was an angry lie, with no sneer. "Yes, she loves me—you fat fool!" He had been unable to admit, even to her husband, that he had failed. So they were fighting over something that had never occurred. . . . .

The husband advanced a little. He was breathing heavily, and his face was becoming a darker red; a fine film of perspiration covered cheeks and brow.

(Please turn to page 110)

Own Your Own Home—*if you can!*

Being a recital of what happens when you take a real-estate man's dare; with some sound advice from the star of "Whoopee" on meeting architects, builders and the mortgage man

by Eddie Cantor

Decorations by Sid L. Hydeman

SOMEWHERE in the long ago it is rumored that actors were crossed with Mexican jumping beans, and they've been leaping ever since. They will not stay put.

Show an actor a train, a boat, or any moving vehicle, and he says: "Ah, home, at last!" I'm no exception—but unfortunately I broke my wife and daughters in to this gypsy existence many years ago. First, Mt. Vernon, N. Y., then California, several months in London, a season in Chicago—east, west, north, south—we've been all over; and while my children might flunk now and then in their arithmetic, their report cards always show one hundred per cent in geography. In fact, these kids of mine could make out a time-table long before they could read "Cinderella" or "Red Riding Hood."

For a good many years, every now and then, the Missus and myself would hear that a great many people had permanent homes, and in these places people would eat and sleep day in and day out, without ever packing a bag or trunk or rushing to make a train. We thought them queer—until, a little more than a year ago, in a suburban town of Long Island, four of my five daughters registered in the local public school, and when they were asked for their permanent residence, they said, in unison: "America." When this crack was brought back to my large ears, I decided then and there that the Cantor children must have a permanent post-office address. Why, it was unfair to the Government to have my family receive letters which had been forwarded from place to place all over the earth for one two-cent stamp. Why, gosh, it wasn't patriotic!

And so on the eventful night of September 10th, 1928 B. C. (Before the Crash), Mrs. Cantor and her favorite comedian sat down to discuss the ways and means of building a house. It took but a short while to realize that we had more ways than means. However, with a great deal of stinting, such as doing without two meals a day, not buying any new clothes for seven or eight years, taking the milk away from the children, and by replacing our three cars with bicycles, we figured that maybe we could afford to build a house.

The moment it got around to my wife's relatives that we were contemplating erecting the "Cantor Home for Girls" most of these relatives jumped immediately into the real-estate business.

But this was to be a permanent residence, and so I decided not to deal with amateurs. One of my dear friends who owned ten acres of land in an exclusive section sold them to me at a bargain. Now all we needed was an architect, a builder, a strong constitution—and money.

The architect, a high-class Frenchman, practically lived with us for weeks. At dinner he would get the best piece of chicken.

I'll never forget those days when I would say, "Let's change my room to the north

These kids of mine could make out a time-table before they could read "Cinderella."

end of the house so that I will have more quiet." And then the good wife would speak up and say: "Yes, and each child must have her own bathroom. That would stop arguments in the morning." And then: "We must have a ballroom—which will also serve as a theater—in the cellar." Then some one would chime in with, "What about a bar?" And Mrs. Cantor would come back and say: "But Eddie doesn't drink."

Well, it went on and on like this, and all the while the architect kept nodding wisely. Little did we know what he had up his sleeve. Three weeks later he brought us the plans. I shall never forget that day if I live another thousand years. The plans looked exactly like the White House, fifty per cent of the Grand Central Station and the entire right side of Madison Square Garden.

"But you ordered all this," said the architect.

"Yes," we said sheepishly, "but we didn't know it was going to look like that. We intend to have a house—not a convention hall. This is just for our family and a few friends; we don't want to pay for the Yale Bowl."

"Let me tell you the cost," said he.

"Go ahead," was our response—and he did!

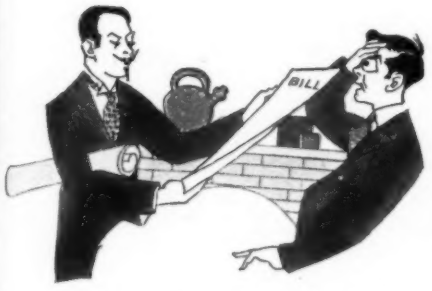
My wife, in fainting, hit her head against the radiator and will carry the mark to her grave. I myself came to over the week-end. We thought the architect had in mind the clearing-house statements of the day before.

"But," he argued, "we can cut this house down so that it will cost you much less."

"All right, start cutting, brother!" we instructed.

He eliminated, with our consent, three bedrooms, three bathrooms, half of the living-room, one-third of the library, fifty per cent of the ballroom, and even the bar suffered—good old bar!

With the new estimate, we said, "Go ahead,"—and engaged a builder. Ten days later my troubles started.



"But you ordered all this," said the architect.

Along came Mr. Builder and said: "By the way, do you intend to have any windows in your house?"

"Why, yes," we answered. "We were counting on it. You can have so much more air when you have windows in a house."

"But," he came back excitedly, "since I don't find them in the original plans, that's considered an extra, which will cost approximately nineteen thousand dollars in addition to the original cost."

"Now, then," he continued, "regarding the water: in the plat, the pipe-lines run within seven feet of the house."

"What does that mean?" we queried.

"It only means that if you want water, we will have to extend the pipe-line to run right into your house."

"Man alive!" I hollered. "Don't you know we want water for bathing, for drinking and maybe for other reasons?"

"I'm sorry," the builder man said.

"How much extra will that cost?" asked my wife, who was by then slightly peeved.

"Well, let's say roughly thirty-five hundred," replied the builder.

That was pretty rough; but it got rougher and rougher. We finally held a conference between the architect, the builder and the victims, Mr. and Mrs. Cantor. The builder kept blaming the architect, and the architect kept saying: "You don't understand my plans."

Well, sir, the longer they argued, the more expensive it was getting for Ziegfeld's funny man. For a while it looked as if we were not going to have a house at all. But no such luck. They finally

The farther they dug, the more I had to dig. If only they would strike oil!

agreed on something—to this day I don't know what it was—and along came an excavating machine and started digging. The farther they dug, the more I had to dig. Gosh, how they dug! I had only one chance to break even: if only they would strike oil!

Coming home at night from the theater, I would stand in the cold and look at the foundation that was being laid. "Here was something concrete," thought I. "A home at last!" And a tear would trickle down my cheek.

Then came the time when the builder said: "You may go now and pick out your bathroom fixtures."

We did not know that according to him, we were only allowed four thousand dollars for all the bathrooms, having chosen sixteen thousand dollars' worth of fixtures.

What little boy or girl can tell me the additional amount that we had to pay?

The same with the electric fixtures. We would pick out a chandelier that cost nine hundred dollars, and the builder would show us his estimate of one hundred and fifty dollars. This kept on until it looked like, besides playing in the theater at night, I would have to sell clothing in the daytime. My two oldest girls, hearing of our predicament, offered to quit school and peddle newspapers.

"But no," I said unflinchingly. "Get your education. Some one in this family must learn to speak English."

At last the house was finished!

The thrill we received on entering the place on October 12th, 1929, was worth everything. It was a cold day, and we decided to turn on the heat. The noise which followed sounded like the French 75's repulsing a German attack. When I tried to fall asleep, my particular radiator rendered "Valencia," accompanied by a Fourth of July celebration such as was never heard before.

"I can't sleep!" said I to my wife.

"*You* can't sleep!" said she. "The children have been up all night and the servants are threatening to leave in the morning!"

"There must be something wrong with the radiators," came from me.

"There shouldn't be," remonstrated my better have. "Didn't the architect tell us that we would have no noise?"

"I guess he figured we would be deaf by the time we got into the house after hearing about so many extras."

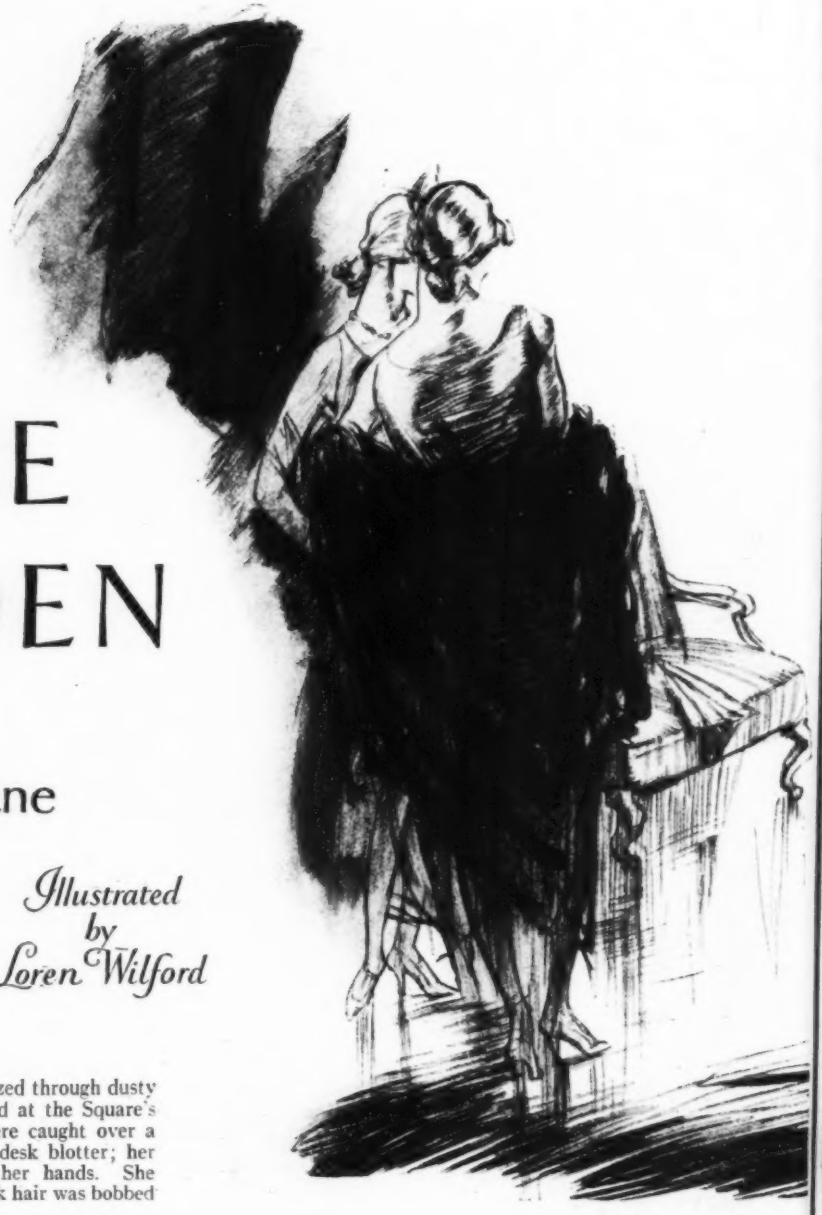
Well, everything is all right now. The house is beautifully decorated by one of New York's smart decorators. It has a lovely terrace, beautiful landscaping and a tremendous mortgage. But we are happy. It is our home. No one can take it away— no one, except my banker, my broker and the builder who hasn't been paid yet.

Here is a bit of advice which may help you, if you are contemplating building a house:

Get an architect: have the builder meet the architect when you are planning your home.

Keep asking questions.

Keep going over the plans—and then when everything is set, for heaven's sake, go to the city and rent an apartment!



VILLAGE MAIDEN

by
Rose Wilder Lane

Illustrated by Loren Wilford

PAULA'S father, who owned the bank, had driven away that morning in the yellow sport roadster; he was taking golf-lessons in the city sixty miles away. Her uncle, the cashier, was away on a camping trip; and her brother Bill had gone to the ball-game. Perched on a high stool behind the bars of the cashier's window, Paula gazed through dusty plate glass at cars coming and going, cars parked at the Square's iron hitching-rails. Her slippers' spike heels were caught over a rung of the stool; her bare elbows rested on a desk blotter; her enigmatic little face was held in the cup of her hands. She weighed ninety-eight pounds, and her straight black hair was bobbed and banged like a Japanese doll's.

"Hello, dreamy eyes!" a young man said, entering. She had known him all her life; he was Harry McIntyre, who worked in his father's drugstore. His bank balance was in red: *O. D. $32.75.* He was good for an overdraft of about seventy-five dollars, but rarely went that far. He had worn Valentino sideburns ages ago—two years ago, when she was in high school; but now he was clean shaven and wore a bright red hat. Paula looked at him dispassionately; she had been his steady for years, but they both knew he was only a date.

She yawned delicately, like a cat; her long blue-gray eyes, narrowing, seemed ever so slightly uptilted at the corners. On the yawn she answered: "Hello, darling."

He was good-looking, and he was a good kid; only somehow, as far as she was concerned, he did not have It. He said: "Going to the dance tonight?"

"Where's a dance?"

"Crystal Springs."

"Oh, I don't know," she answered, but she had brightened. "Going to take me?"

"Well, I'm thinking it over."

"All right," she said. "You win."

He leaned on the ledge outside the bars and pushed his red hat back. "You darn' little kid!" he said. "Sometimes I think I'm crazy about you."

She smiled, her teeth very white against the flexible line of bright rouge. "I wouldn't worry about that," she told him comfortably. "Think again."

He laughed.

With the noise of a threshing machine, an ancient car covered with ancient mud drew to the curb and stopped. Old man Latimer, the richest farmer in the county, swung out of it and came into the bank. "Righto!" said Harry. "See you tonight."

There were no more customers after the farmer. The bank was supposed to be open until six o'clock; but at half-past five, having posted the day's business, Paula turned over the sign hanging inside the glass door, so that from without it read: *"Bank Closed."* She locked the door, and giving an angry thought to Bill, who had taken the coupé, she walked home.

It was a walk of four long blocks, for the Blake house was quite at the edge of town. Lilacs were still blooming in some yards, but the porches of all the bungalows were banked with spirea in

"*She's had a row with her sweetie. Charley Howard's treated her rotten.*"

The love story of a girl who realized life might be hard but believed it might be beautiful

"We'll just have a pick-up supper," Mrs. Blake said. "C. L. telephoned he wont be home tonight." She always referred to her husband by his initials. She said cheerfully: "Seems somebody ran into him; the car's laid up for repairs."

She had looked like Paula once; and at a distance they were sometimes mistaken for each other now. Her bob was marcelled, however, and there were white hairs in it; the skin was beginning to wither around the eyes and under her chin. She wore a cleverly cut, sleeveless housedress, a gay pattern of orange and red on white, and her feet twinkled in smart slippers. She was the mother of eight children and she was forty-two years old, but she looked thirty-five.

"Gosh, what a life!" Paula thought, when she thought of her mother at all. (Usually she took her mother for granted, like the solid earth or the sunshine.) Paula did not intend to marry. She stretched out her legs now, showing the brief pink knickerbockers at the top of long sun-tan stockings; her thin brown arms curved and straightened luxuriously above her head. She relaxed like a kitten on the divan's softness, and returned to her lips the cigarette held between her fingers.

"Tired, honey?" her mother asked. Paula was not expected to help with supper, because she worked in the bank.

Paula yawned, at the same time making a sound of assent. "The bank's a washout," she said—expressing, not a comment upon that financial institution, but her attitude toward work in it.

A tear ran down Anne's cheek. Smoke had got into her eye, in her effort to enjoy a cigarette and soothe the baby simultaneously. "Well, there's worse things," she said to Paula. Anne had worked in the bank, before she married. "Rockabye, ba-by," she sang with resignation. Her hair tumbled in burnished red waves around her hot face. Her blue eyes were usually brimming with cheerfulness; now they were tired. She sang almost viciously:

blossom. The Blake house had both lilacs and spirea; it was an old-fashioned, three-story frame house, painted white. Two cars stood under the elms in the side yard; Paula looked at them and knew she would find her married sisters in the house. They had moved to other towns when they married, but often ran in like this for the night. The irrelevant noises of squabbling children and a ripple of calm feminine talk met her on the porch, and Jimmy's kiddie-car lay upset before the door.

Paula pushed it aside, and walking into the large, cluttered living-room, she dropped onto a divan. "Hello, Mary," she said. "How's the world, Anne? What's the matter with the infant?"

"Teething," Anne replied briefly. She was a year older than Paula; her bob was disordered and her face flushed, bent over the baby in her arms. They talked above the fretful thin squawks. Jimmy and Mary's boy, Junior, contested possession of Jimmy's toy pistol, while Mary and Mrs. Blake came and went through the kitchen's swinging door, putting supper on the dining-room table.

"Rockabye, baby, on the tree-top,
You poor little tike, you sure are a flop—

"Mamma, is there anything in this *world* that will make her shut up?"

"Give her to me," Mary said. She went out on the porch; the sound of her steps going up and down, up and down, and the baby's thin wails, diminuendo, crescendo, came vaguely through the quieter house. Jimmy and Junior had swept out like a storm; now their amiable prattle followed the kiddie-car up and down the sidewalk. Anne pushed back her hair. "How did you ever stand eight of us?" she asked her mother.

"Supper's ready," Mother said. "Oh, you get used to it, Anne. Switch on the lights, will you, Paula, and you girls wash up if you're going to."

In the bathroom Paula gazed intently at her eyebrows. No, they did not need the tweezers. Her face emerged from cold cream and skin tonic looking oddly naked without its make-up. She colored and powdered it again quickly, and with anxious care drew the bright curves of her mouth. She brushed her lacquer-shining hair, and clipped an infinitesimal raggedness from the edge of her bang. Others might let their hair grow long and wear it in a bun; that did not suit her type. She drew a perfume-moist finger along her eyebrows and behind her ears, polished her nails again on the balls of her thumbs. "Paula!" they kept calling to her. "Paula, hurry up!" She heard Bill washing his hands at the kitchen sink.

He grinned at her from the supper-table when she appeared. "Hello! Who's the lucky gink tonight?"

She and Bill liked each other, if they did fight a lot. She said: "Harry. Dance at Crystal Springs."

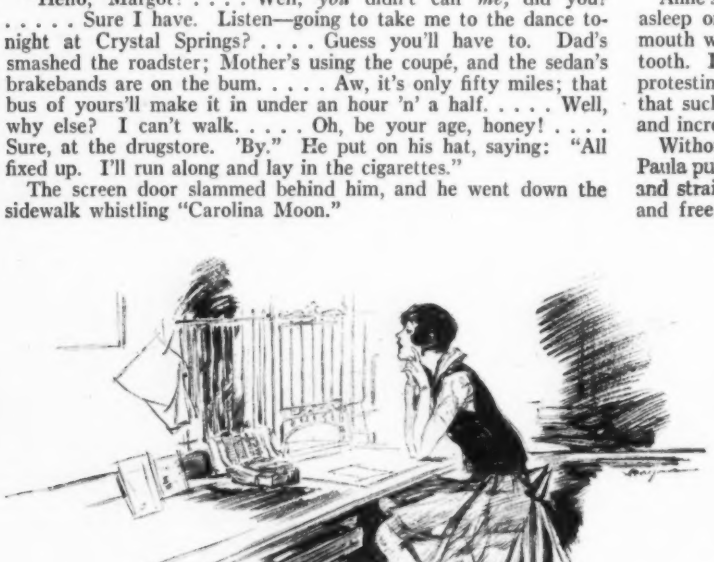
The others had eaten and left the table; Mary was putting Junior and Jimmy to bed upstairs; they were having a pillow-fight. Anne came down in a kimono and turned on the water in the bathtub; she and her mother were going to a bridge-club meeting that night.

"Why don't you come along, Bill?" Paula suggested.

"Maybe I will," Bill said. He looked strong and handsome, getting up from the table, hitching at his belted trousers, sauntering to the telephone. Paula, eating her salad and two wedges of angel-food, heard him kidding Margaret.

"Hello, Margot! . . . . Well, *you* didn't call *me,* did you? . . . . . Sure I have. Listen—going to take me to the dance tonight at Crystal Springs? . . . . Guess you'll have to. Dad's smashed the roadster; Mother's using the coupé, and the sedan's brakebands are on the bum. . . . . Aw, it's only fifty miles; that bus of yours'll make it in under an hour 'n' a half. . . . . Well, why else? I can't walk. . . . . Oh, be your age, honey! . . . . Sure, at the drugstore. 'By." He put on his hat, saying: "All fixed up. I'll run along and lay in the cigarettes."

The screen door slammed behind him, and he went down the sidewalk whistling "Carolina Moon."



Behind the bars, Paula gazed at cars coming and going.

"Only way we'll know how we'll hit it off is to get married and see."

Anne's things were scattered in Paula's room, and the baby lay asleep on the counterpane. Paula bent over her. The formless mouth was open, showing the hot swollen gums and one emerging tooth. In her sleep the baby squirmed, screwed up her face, made protesting movements with her uncertain hands. Strange, to think that such a little time ago this baby had not been at all—strange and incredible, that once Paula herself had not been.

Without a sound, holding her breath lest she wake the baby, Paula pulled her dress over her head. In the mirror she was round and straight as a sapling. She loved to feel so straight and slim and free. Two hooks fastened the wisp of fresh brassière, two more the ribbon garter-belt over which she slipped the briefest of knickerbockers. With a rustle like a sigh the chiffon dancing frock slid silken and light and frail over her shoulders, down over her light and happy body. Barefoot, she ran downstairs, carrying stockings and slippers.

Her mother sat in the living-room, drawing on her own stockings. When Father was not at home they all dressed thus, companionably, downstairs, because the old-fashioned bathroom was there. Mrs. Blake wore a georgette dress the color of a red-bird, and the coral earrings Father had bought her on their trip to California. She was beautiful.

Paula said: "Mamma, you're simply beautiful; I love that shade of rouge on you." She sat down and began to draw the pale sheer stockings on. "I think I've got good legs, don't you?"

"Yes, Paula, you have lovely legs," her mother said. "Are you going to that dance at Crystal Springs?"

"M'h'm—with Harry."

"I do like Harry," her mother said.

"Oh, Harry's all right," said Paula.

She buckled her garters as fast as she could, and stepped into her slippers. Harry's horn was honking. She snatched up vanity-case, comb, chiffon handkerchief, and hurriedly gave her mother's shoulders a hug. "Have a good time," her mother said.

"You too, angel!" Paula said, just touching her

mother's cheek with her own, not kissing because of the make-up. She snatched a packet of cigarettes in passing, and was off.

In a moment the car had passed all the familiar houses, the Square, the garage, the Farmers' Exchange; in a moment the lighted windows behind spirea bushes and lilac were left behind, and the gaunt dark schoolhouse and the last filling-station. Then Harry's foot pressed the accelerator, and the white highway was a spinning ribbon. The headlights made a cone in the darkness, and the wind whistled thin and shrill against the coupé's rigid top. Paula lowered the window, and the wind came in, smelling of fields, of woods, of all indeterminate things that make the scent of a spring night.

"Mmm, I love it!" she cried. The speedometer said sixty.

They talked little. Once Paula said: "Cigarette?" She lighted one at the glowing coil of the electric lighter, puffed it, and gave it to him. Once, when on a curve a wagon and two staring, lunging horses appeared, so near that to avoid them seemed impossible, she said,—the danger past,—"Some driver!" Gruff with anger, Harry exclaimed: "Damned fools! They ought to make 'em carry a light." Sometimes when the highway ran straight ahead, he slipped an arm around her, and they kissed. "Kid, I am crazy about you," he said, as if a little marveling at this, not unready to laugh at it.

"Why wouldn't you be?" she answered. "Think I'd go to a dance with a boy who wasn't?"

Then they were in Crystal Springs. All the little towns through which they had flashed—groups of lighted store windows, garage signs, shaded lamps glowing beyond masses of spirea—all those towns were like beads on a string whose pendant was Crystal Springs. This was a large town—nearly five thousand population. There were tall business blocks, and expanses of glistening shop-windows; there were many residence streets, and a real park, and several large hotels. The dance was at one of these hotels.

Up the marble steps to the mosaic-floored lobby Paula went, with already something of the dance in her light feet. The blare and whine and blood-throb beat of the music came from an upper floor; the lobby had a festive air, with groups of men and girls passing through it, all strangers. Paula and Harry went up in the elevator, and Harry got the tickets while she renewed her make-up and smoothed her hair in the dressing-room. Some other girls were there; they said it was a swell dance. In a corner one girl was crying; as fast as she wiped the tears from her black-streaked cheeks, more tears flowed. She should have known better than to wear mascara, or else have known better than to cry, Paula thought, while asking: "What's the matter with her?"

"She's had a row with her sweetie," some one said. "Charley Howard's treated her simply rotten tonight."

"Well, why doesn't she make *him* weep?" Paula demanded. "Believe it or not, if any boy treated *me* mean!"

The girl flared: "Oh, it's easy to talk!" She wailed, "I—I love him," and dabbed with her wet gray ball of handkerchief.

Some one else said, "Oh, snap out of it, Leslie! Love never killed anybody." Paula agreed with that.

Harry was waiting for her in the red-carpeted hall. Beyond him wide doors were open, and there was a blaze of light on moving heads and shoulders. The orchestra was playing "Carolina Moon." "Carolina—moon is—shining, shining on the—one I love the—best." Life was just too beautiful. Paula began to hum, just a little inaudible hum in her throat; she couldn't help it. Others were humming, were singing, all in the big bright room full of dancing, full of happiness, enchanted by the music of the violins. "Carolina—moon is—shining—" Then she saw him.

He came straight toward her, out of the maze of dancers which seemed to part to let him through and close like a curtain behind him. "Where have you been all my life?" he said. She had never seen him before. He had come straight to her, and she was glad. She was glad when he put his arm around her; she had forgotten all about Harry, waiting there for her to turn to him.

She danced as though she were the music itself, as lilting, as sure. She danced with a grave little aloofness, her head turned ever so slightly from him, lashes drooping, her smile altogether for herself, as though her lips held a secret. Her hand was light on his sleeve, his arm light about her. She did not think at all.

When the music stopped, they stood by a door through which the freshness of the night came in. She lifted her eyes to his, almost shyly; then her lashes drooped again. Opening her vanity-case, she powdered her little white nose. The vanity-case shut with a tiny click. There was a clatter of applause all around them till the orchestra, yielding, began again to play "Carolina Moon." They danced. This time, now and again, as they danced, her lashes swept upward and she looked at him.

The orchestra played "Way Down on the Ohio," while they stood on the balcony and talked. Crystal springs were not far from this hotel; the stream ran in its rocky banks almost below this

Leslie sprang to her feet. "I wont tell you one thing about it. It's my business, what he—"

balcony. Below it, too, there were rustling tree-tops, and flower-beds that smelled sweet. Paula leaned against the balcony railing and smoked a cigarette. She smoked slowly, nonchalantly, tilting her head to blow little clouds of smoke, like kisses, toward the stars. After a few puffs, he had thrown his cigarette away.

"Look," he said, "I'm going to marry you." Paula laughed.

"I love your line," she answered.

"You didn't need to speak a word, to get me."

"Lots of girls do, I bet."

"Marry? Sure thing. Let's."

"No—love your line."

"Oh, I've got several," he said. "This is a new one. I've never tried it before."

She laughed again, and he said lightly: "Believe it or not. Dance?"

They danced. He had a very nice mouth, sensitive and firm. His eyes were hazel, his hair a light brown. He was just tall enough, she thought. She could not see anything extraordinary about him, to account for the way she felt. Of course he was a divine dancer. She hoped Harry would not be mad; probably he wasn't—he was dancing with Margaret. She and Margaret waved to each other, passing in the dance. Paula felt both happy and frightened, and very much excited; she hardly knew what she was doing. She didn't quite know how she happened to be standing before a woman about as old as her mother, a dark-eyed woman in pale gray georgette.

"Mother," he said, "here's the girl I'm going to marry. Isn't she a knock-out?"

His mother smiled fondly at him, and very charmingly at Paula. "Do you mean me to take you seriously?"

"Well," he said, "if she will, you can."

Paula didn't know what to do. She was so afraid she was blushing that she was furious with him. She laughed, and said: "Do girls usually take him seriously?" Her heart was beating like anything; she hoped her voice sounded natural. Other people came up; the music started, and they danced again. They kept on dancing together. Whenever she began to dance with anyone else, he cut in, and then he wouldn't give her up. She couldn't help that, could she? Between dances, they talked. Sometimes she thought he meant what he was saying, that it wasn't just a line. But she wouldn't let him suspect she believed a word he said, and perhaps she didn't. Perhaps she only wanted to. She didn't know. She had never felt this way before.

At supper his mother made up a little party, including them. She talked with Paula, and Paula liked her very much.

"I'm Paula Blake," she told her. "My father owns the bank at Tracy." His mother had heard of C. L. Blake. "You must come and see me sometimes, when you're in Crystal Springs, my dear," she said. Paula did not know exactly what this meant. But she thought his mother wouldn't really mind, if he did mean to marry her. Of course he didn't. Anyway, she didn't intend ever to marry; she remembered that.

"Look," he said, "I'm going to marry you." "I love your line," she answered.

When the dance was ending, at three o'clock, he insisted on taking her home. She protested that she must go with Harry, but he said he'd attend to that. He brought Harry to her, where she was standing with Margaret and Bill in the lobby, and when she saw Harry's sullen eyes, she said what she hadn't intended to. "You wont mind, will you Harry?" she asked sweetly. Harry said he certainly didn't.

All the Tracy cars came quite slowly along the highway. Their lights cut swaths through the darkness, sweeping leisurely over fields and hills and sleeping farmhouses. All the little towns through which they went were dark. And somehow, while they sat in the coziness of his car, that cushioned box that shut them closely in together from the vague night, he convinced her that he really wanted to marry her. He beat down her gay, brittle wisecracks until she had no defense left.

"Why shouldn't we?" he argued. "I never saw a girl I'd ask, before. You're the only one I've ever wanted to marry. I'm not so bad, either, when you get used to me. All you've got to do is fall for me about half as hard as I've fallen for you, and we'll make a go of it. I know we will. Anyway, why not try it? It's a sporting proposition."

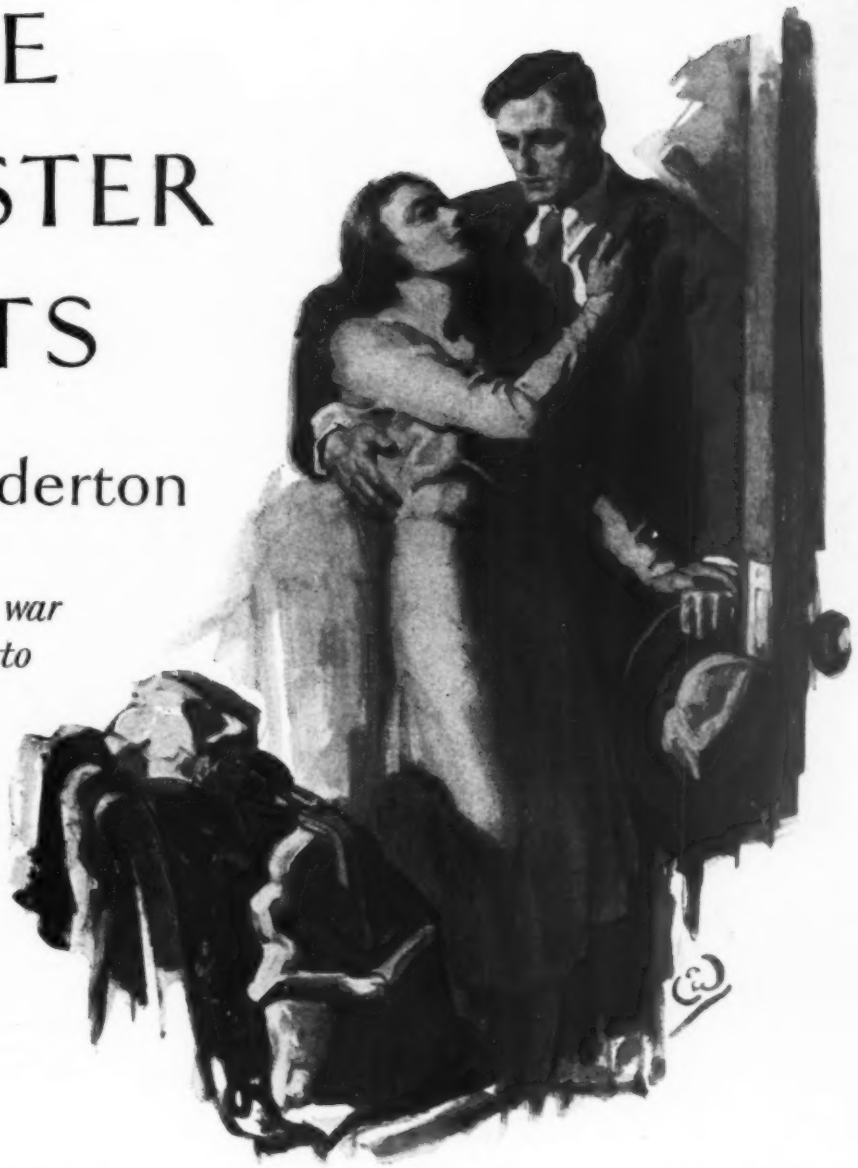
She took a deep breath. Her voice was small and steady. "Well—I don't want you to think I'm selfish, or—or peculiar, or anything. But when it comes to marrying, I think it's pretty important to know how much money there'll be, and what the prospects are. I don't want you to hate me, but that's the way I feel about it. My mother eloped with Papa when she was about my age, and he had only ten dollars; and that's romantic and everything, but I think it's stupid."

"So do I!" he almost shouted. "Didn't I know you were a brainy kid, the minute I saw you?" He hugged her exultantly, then drew her comfortably against his shoulder. "Now let's talk this over. Don't get it into your head I'm asking you to marry me tomorrow. I wouldn't do it. Next August, I think, would be about right, or maybe September. We'll *(Please turn to page 141)*

One Gangster Quits

by Seven Anderton

In the Russo-Japanese war was coined a phrase to describe troops assigned to the most desperate errand—"The certain-death party"—Many a young man in America finds himself in such a party, before he realizes it . . . . .



"I'd have quit peacefully, but they wouldn't have it."

DANGER has a subtle and secret method by which she gives warning of her approach to those who flirt with her constantly. Hall Morrow, coming in from Canada with a plane-load of liquor, felt a sudden urge to look to the rear. Twisting in his seat, he obeyed the impulse and beheld another plane skimming the morning air. The other ship was a small, trim craft, evidently equal if not superior in speed to the large and powerful but heavily loaded ship piloted by Morrow.

"Hm-m," muttered the aërial rum-runner, turning again to his controls. "Unless the old hunch is kidding me, Volstead's brood has sprouted wings. Looks like time to use the old bean."

For months Hall Morrow had been making two trips a week from a spot some distance north of the Canadian border to a private landing-field tucked away in a rural section far south of the boundary. He timed his trips to arrive at the landing-field just as dawn was breaking. Then the liquor was taken from his plane, loaded into a camouflaged truck and hurried cityward. On previous trips, all had gone off like clockwork; but the sight of that plane behind him told Morrow that this was another time.

The flyer thought rapidly. He was now within fifteen miles of the private landing-spot. It lay almost due west. He banked over and headed his ship due south, opening up in an attempt to draw away from the other plane.

After several minutes he shot another glance backward. The pursuing craft had also increased its speed and was following his new course. There could no longer be any doubt as to the purpose of the men who rode the sky behind him.

"Pretty slick, at that," said Morrow to himself. "Evidently they learned the time of my arrival and came up to meet me. They probably know that in order to bring that much more booze, I carry only enough gas to get me safely to the field. They know I can't run for the other side now, so all they have to do is stick on my trail until I run out of gas. I've got to fool 'em somehow—that's all there is to it."

The flyer thought hard for several minutes while the liquor-bearing plane plunged on, its wide-open motor roaring a pæan of power. Then a grin spread over the young pilot's face. He swung the nose of his craft toward the east and headed directly for the big lake, some twenty miles distant. He began to climb as rapidly as possible with his heavy load. A backward glance showed the other plane still following.

"Come on, boys," chuckled Morrow. "See how you like this trick."

The great blue expanse of the lake was rapidly drawing nearer. Morrow fell rapidly to work. With a torn handkerchief and the

Illustrated by E. F. Ward

Beside the plane, Morkeeping them covered,

straps of his helmet he lashed the rudder controls. He drew the belt from his leather jacket and prepared to lash the stick. Then he inspected his parachute and harness. A glance over the side showed him that he was almost directly above the shore of the lake.

"I'm getting one break, anyhow," muttered the flyer. "Wind is in the east."

Turning quickly back to his task, Morrow lashed the stick. In another moment he was free of his straps and over the side, hurling himself away from the plane with an agile twist of his body. As he plunged toward the earth, he began to count.

At the count of ten, he pulled the cord, and the white pilot chute fluttered and opened. Then came the tug of his harness as the big chute grabbed the wind. Riding safely earthward, Morrow waved his hand at the men in the pursuing ship. He had jumped from an altitude of about six thousand feet.

"Good-by, old girl," he muttered as his eyes sought the plane he had abandoned. The rum-laden craft was still speeding straight out over the lake. "See how far you can go. Make them drag deep water, if they get that hooch."

The stiff breeze from the east was carrying the parachute along; and Morrow, looking down, saw that he was going to clear the lake by a good margin. Then his eyes sought the plane that had been chasing him. That craft was now heading back west and coming down as fast as safety would permit.

"Going to land and try to grab me!" exclaimed Morrow. "Well, I'm going to land in timber. They can't come down very close. Chances are still good."

Again the young pilot glanced down at the expanse of woodland in which he was about to alight. It was not more than a thousand feet distant, now—five hundred. He turned his eyes just in time to see his forsaken plane suddenly side-slip, roll over and plunge toward the surface of the lake. Cases of liquor spilled from the falling craft and outsped the plane in a race to their watery grave.

Then the trees were but a hundred feet below. Morrow began swinging his body to guide the parachute away from the tall trees. He would be all right if he could land in brush. He succeeded. Missing a tall oak tree by a narrow margin, he relaxed his supple body for the landing, and the next moment was sprawled among bushes and underbrush tangled with vines. The chute's silken expanse settled over him like a cast net.

Making his way clear of the chute and brush, Morrow halted in a small clear place beneath an oak and shucked off his leather coat and a suit of khaki jumpers. These, with his helmet, he tossed in a heap on the ground. He was now dressed in a light-weight suit of excellent gray material, which fitted his tall form well and gave him a well-groomed look despite the fact that the suit was slightly rumpled from being worn underneath. In his hand he grasped an automatic pistol, taken from the pocket of the leather coat.

"For your own health, boys, I hope I'm able to dodge you," he thought.

The next moment he was speeding north through the sheltering trees. Dodging the thickest of the brush and hurdling the smaller clumps, he made remarkable speed.

After ten minutes of flight, the fugitive halted. His broad chest was heaving deeply, but he was not puffing. He listened intently for several moments. There was a faint sound of pursuit some distance to the south. He could hear men's voices, quite a number of them, calling to one another. While floating earthward in the chute, Morrow had seen a highway skirting the timber. He judged the road to be about a half mile to the east. He turned in that direction, moving less swiftly and being more careful not to make any loud noise.

Suddenly he was at the edge of the timber. The paved slab of highway lay before him. Beyond the road stood a field of corn turning yellow from the first bite of frost. The sun had just risen, and its long rays danced over the thick standing corn. Remaining in the shelter of the timber's edge, Morrow glanced up and down the road. Northward the pavement was deserted. Less than a quarter of a mile to the south, several autos and the trim plane that had trailed him stood in the highway. Two men were guarding the plane and the cars.

"Hm-m!" mused Morrow. "They must have had cops spotted all over the countryside to nab me when they ran me down. No other explanation for so many cars on the road up here at this hour in the morning. Those two birds are watching to see I don't break from the timber and cross the road while the others are beating the brush for me. If I could just get over into that cornfield without being seen, I'd be pretty well set to give them the slip."

The highway ran straight for more than a mile in either direction, however, and the fugitive knew that those two men beside the parked plane and cars were watching it every second. They were there to see that their prey did not escape from the timber into the farming country that lay west of the highway.

Then a grin spread across the young pilot's face. A few yards from where he stood, a small natural watercourse, now dry, ran through a culvert beneath the highway. The dry bed was grown with smart-weed and dead rushes.

Moving swiftly to this ditch, Morrow flung himself prone and wormed his way to and through the culvert. Two minutes later he stood up, safe in the shelter of the tall corn.

"Glad that ditch was dry," he chuckled, brushing the dust and trash from his garments. "Now to get away from here!"

Hardly had he begun to pick his way among the cornstalks, how-

row halted his captives and climbed into the cockpit.

ever, when he stopped with a little snort of disgust. He had suddenly realized that the searching officers would find his trail through the culvert and across the soft ground of the cornfield. He stood for several moments in deep thought. Then he chuckled again. His hand tightened its grip on the automatic, and he turned and began to make his way cautiously toward where the plane stood on the highway.

Presently he could hear the voices of the two men he had seen beside the parked cars. Slowly, carefully, he crept up through the thick corn. Then he saw the two men. They were standing on the far side of the pavement, their backs half turned toward him, while they watched the edge of the timber.

"The boys ought to scare him out pretty soon," remarked one who was in flying togs, evidently the pilot of the plane. "If he makes a break, I'll jump in the plane and get over him. He can't hide from me if he leaves the brush."

"He'll be damned lucky if he gets across the road," remarked the other grimly, patting the stock of the rifle that lay in the crook of his arm. "I'm pretty good with this."

Softly Morrow slipped along until he placed one of the parked cars between himself and the two guards. Taking a large handkerchief from his pocket, he tied it over his face, covering his face from the eyes down.

No officer of the law had as yet seen him under incriminating circumstances. Thus masked he crept from the cornfield and onto the highway. Rising to his feet, he stepped quietly around the car.

"Don't make a move, boys," he snapped, "or I'll have to perforate both of you."

There was something in his soft voice that held the men motionless. Only their eyes turned in his direction. Surprise, chagrin and anger mingled in their expressions.

"You say you're good with that rifle, my friend," chuckled Morrow. "Well, let's see how well you can empty it and toss it into the ditch."

The man with the rifle ejected the cartridges and cast the gun from him without taking his eyes from Morrow.

"Now both of you raise your hands high and turn your backs toward me."

The men obeyed. Two minutes later their revolvers, emptied of cartridges, lay beside the rifle among the weeds in the ditch.

"All right, fellows." Morrow jerked his head toward the plane standing in the highway some hundred yards distant. "Walk down there to the plane."

Beside the plane, Morrow halted his captives and keeping them covered, climbed into the cockpit. He tried the controls and glanced at the instrument-board. He could handle the ship, he decided. The motor was still well warmed up. It answered his first attempt to start it with a deep-throated roar. He fed it gas, and the trim craft began to move down the highway.

Ten yards—twenty—thirty yards separated him from the two disarmed men who stood glowering after him. Morrow dropped his gun into his side coat pocket and waved a mocking farewell to the pair in the road. Suddenly they turned and raced toward their discarded weapons. Morrow laughed aloud as he turned to the controls. He would be far out of range before the enemy could open fire. The ship was now skimming along the pavement with the speed of an express train. She was almost ready to pick up. He eased back on the stick. . . . .

A small city passed beneath him and safely south of that town, he brought the appropriated ship down in a plowed field less than half a mile from a way station on the electric line to Chicago. . . . . At eleven o'clock he entered a telephone booth in a Loop drugstore and called a number. For the first time in his career outside the law, Hall Morrow was preparing to report failure to his chief.

When he emerged from the booth several minutes later, his brows were knit in a tiny frown. He stood for several moments on the curb, thinking. Then he shrugged his shoulders and hailed a cruising taxi.

It was just eight o'clock that evening when Hall Morrow walked into a hotel. He sauntered across the lobby, entered the elevator and was presently knocking at the door of a room on the third floor.

"Come in," called a gruff voice.

Four men were seated in the room which Morrow entered. No sweeter quartet of tough eggs could have been gathered in a month of combing Chicago's gangland. All wore good clothes, but wore them in an unaccustomed manner.

They were Joe Spatillo and his three most trusted lieutenants. Spatillo, known as "Black Joe," was the head of one of the most ruthless mobs ever spawned in the long-suffering city by the booze racket. Before prohibition, he had been a pool-hall proprietor with a police record for petty offenses. Now he was a millionaire and sat securely on his throne. He was a burly brute with a swarthy, pockmarked face upon which cruelty, greed and cunning were etched.

His three lieutenants were a trio well fitted to serve such a master. All four of the hoodlums turned their eyes on Morrow as he entered the room. The air seemed tense. The expressions on the four faces were grim—suspicious, dangerous.

"Set down," growled Spatillo, nodding toward a chair.

Morrow sank easily into the chair. He was facing the other four men. He had changed to a neat dark blue suit. Perfectly groomed and evidently at ease, he presented a decided contrast

to the other four. His face and hands were tanned deeply by sun and wind. In his gray eyes as they surveyed his companions lurked that fearlessness that Nature molds into the make-up of the true adventurer.

"Well," snapped Spatillo, his beady eyes narrowing. "Let's have the story."

Morrow calmly lighted a cigarette, snapped the burnt match into a handy cuspidor and proceeded to tell his listeners in detail what had happened that morning.

The gangsters listened in ominous silence.

"So," Morrow concluded his narrative, "I outsmarted the boys, after all. The ship and the booze are on the bottom of Lake Michigan. I got away from them in their own plane—and not one of them could identify me if he met me tonight. That's all."

"It is?" sneered Spatillo. "Well, it's a good story, anyhow. None of the boys who were waiting at the field saw you or any other plane. I found that out this afternoon. There wasn't a thing about all this in the afternoon papers. How do you account for that?"

"Well," answered Morrow softly, "I was fifteen or twenty miles from the landing-spot when I saw the other plane on my trail. They couldn't see me that far at dawn. As for the story not being in the papers, nobody saw the fun but the cops and me. Why should they give the papers a yarn when the joke was on them?"

There was silence for a moment. Spatillo's eyes continued to bore into the smiling flyer.

"Say, Morrow," snarled the racketeer finally, "what do you think this is going to buy you, anyhow? You've been making plenty good with me. I've given you all the breaks in the world. Do you expect to make me for an airship and a load of liquor and get away with it?"

An automatic appeared in Hall Morrow's hand. The lounging youth seemed to have hardly moved, but the black muzzle of the weapon covered his interrogators steadily.

"I saw this coming," said Morrow softly. "Now you fellows sit still. Raise your arms high above your heads. Good! Now get up carefully and stand with your faces against that wall over there—and keep reaching toward the ceiling."

Five minutes later, six guns taken from the gang lay on the table that stood in the center of the room. Beside the guns lay four bill-folds and a flashlight. Morrow looked at the collection and smiled.

"That's all," he announced, "except that derringer you carry in your sleeve, Spatillo. Lower your right arm easily until I collect that cute little tool. —Fine!" said Morrow as he tossed the derringer onto the table with the other guns. "Now you may all sit down. I have something to say to you."

The four turned from the wall and took the chairs they had formerly occupied. Their captor stood beside the table on which lay their weapons.

His gun covered them unwaveringly, and the faint twinkle of amusement still gleamed in his gray eyes.

"Spatillo," said Morrow, "that remark you made after I had told you what kept me from landing your last load of hooch made up my mind for me. I'm through with you and your racket. I've nothing personal against you or any of your hired men. I'm simply washed up on the whole works. You say I've made good with you. Let me tell you that what I've made hasn't been pay for one-tenth of the chances I have taken.

"I came to Chicago to learn to be an aviator. You picked me up just when I was about ready to get my pilot's license. I was damned fool enough to listen to your proposition. It sounded like ready money and plenty of excitement. I fell for it. I have been bringing in a heavy load of hooch twice a week for more than a year. You have sold that hooch for ten times what it cost to land it in the United States. You have paid me two hundred dollars a week.

"Now you have the crust to tell me that you have been a benefactor to me—and you threaten me because I had bad luck with a load of booze and sunk a ship in the lake to keep from being caught with the goods.

"Several times in the past you've told me about the things that would happen to me if I should try to quit you and your racket. Well, I'm quitting. Let's see them happen. I'm telling you good-by right now. I'm going to take your bill-folds with me. I haven't looked in them, but you birds always carry plenty of cash. I don't care how much it is. It isn't as much as I have coming to me from your mob."

Morrow moved across the room and picked up a wastebasket. He set the basket on the table and piled in it the guns he had taken.

He picked up the bill-folds and thrust them into the side pocket of his coat.

"Now,"—he smiled,—"I am leaving. I'm doing a fade-out. I'm not old yet—and I have my eyes open in time. I'm not scared by you. You have kept me on the pay-sheet because I had more brains than you. I still have them. After all, you are only a bunch of bums in good clothes. You'll never see me again."

He picked up the telephone that stood on a small table and with one vigorous jerk wrenched it loose from the wall.

"I'm taking this basket of guns with me," he remarked.

"Needles got the flash," he reported. "Now let's get out of here. Follow me."

"I'll set it down by the elevator. I hope you get them back. If you don't, it'll just be too bad. Don't any of you come out of this room until you're sure I am safe in the elevator. After that, I don't care what you do."

He removed the key from the lock of the door, stepped into the hall—and a moment later there was the sound of the key turning in the lock. Spatillo leaped to his feet.

"Keep quiet, you guys," he ordered as he grabbed the flashlight from the table and stepped quickly to the window. Pointing the torch out the window, he winked a signal. He waited a moment and repeated it.

"Needles got the flash," he reported of his man planted across the street in case of need. "Now let's get out of here. Follow me up the fire-escape."

Down in the lobby of the hotel Hall Morrow paused at the desk and laid down the key with which he had locked the room; then he walked leisurely across the lobby to the entrance.

As he emerged from the hotel and stepped across the sidewalk toward a waiting taxi, a big car swung out from where it had been parked at the curb several spots away.

As the auto came even with Morrow, a hand holding a heavy automatic pistol was thrust from the window. The automatic spoke three times in quick succession.

Then the lone gunman in the big car stepped on the gas, and there was a howl of gears as the machine leaped away. For a moment Hall Morrow stood swaying; then his hand brought his gun from his coat pocket. He lifted the weapon and leveled it at the figure crouched over the wheel in the fleeing auto. The gun barked. There was a cry, and the driver straightened suddenly in his seat. The big car, still in gear and with a dying man's foot pushing the throttle to the floor, swerved wildly across the street. Narrowly missing a cab that was coming from the other direction, it bounded over the curb, careened across the sidewalk and crashed through the window of a haberdashery shop.

Pandemonium broke loose, and the street suddenly swarmed with a crowd of people, as only a city crowd can appear—out of apparently nowhere. All eyes were for several moments fixed on the speeding car whose wheel had suddenly been manned by death. When some one finally thought to look for the man who had been shot by the driver, the slender young man who had stopped three bullets had disappeared.

"Wherever he is, he's dead," an eyewitness told a policeman who had pushed his way through the crowd. "The fellow in the car shot him three times right in the stomach and from less than fifteen feet away."

Black Joe Spatillo and his three henchmen heard this from where they stood on the fringe of the crowd. They had just emerged from the hotel. Spatillo turned and led the way to where a big blue limousine was parked, a block from the hotel entrance.

"Dead, hell!" snapped Spatillo as the four piled into the car. "That blank-blank was wearing a bullet-proof vest; and Needles, the hophead, didn't have sense enough to drill him in the bean."

"Where you going?" asked one of the men.

"I know," snarled Spatillo, starting the car. "He wont go home. He knows I know where he lives. But he's got a jane who lives up on North Clark Street. He don't even know that I know about her. She's a steno in a real-estate office. He'll beat it for her place. If we can't beat him there, we'll wait until he comes out—or go in after him."

The car swung into Clark Street and headed north. The gangster called Jim had procured a short-barreled rifle of heavy bore from its hiding-place and now sat with it across his knees, loaded and ready for action.

In a telephone-booth in a drug-store about a block from the hotel entrance where the crowd still milled about, Hall Morrow was talking to a girl—the girl.

"Got your bags packed?" inquired Morrow.

Morrow wormed his way through the culvert. Two minutes later he stood up, safe.

"Yes," came the answer.

"Good. I had a little trouble quitting, but everything's all right now. Get your things on, and I'll see you soon."

Walking from the drug-store, Morrow hailed a taxi and gave a North Clark Street address. He leaned back on the cushions and pressed his hand to a spot just above his belt. He was going to be sore for a few days where those bullets had pounded him through his bullet-proof vest.

At Lake Street the taxi was forced to halt because the bridge was open to let a vessel pass. Looking ahead past his driver, Morrow gave a sudden start. Just ahead of them was an auto he knew. A glance told him that it was occupied by Black Spatillo and his bodyguard.

"I wonder!" muttered Morrow to himself. Then he leaned forward and instructed his driver to stay behind the big blue machine, keeping it in sight without getting too close. The driver nodded and started the taxi. The bridge had closed, and the traffic was pouring across.

Blocks slid past, and presently the big car ahead swung up to the curb and halted before the same address Morrow had given the taxi driver.

"Don't stop," Morrow ordered his driver. "Drive on to the next drug-store, quick. There's one on the second corner ahead."

Morrow slid down in the seat of the taxi, keeping out of sight while it passed the parked car. There was a gleam in his gray eyes, and his lips were compressed into a straight hard line.

"Wonder how they found out about Rita, and where she lives?" he questioned himself.

He sat up and glared back toward the dimmed lights of the parked car. He was still glaring when the taxi stopped before a drug-store.

(Please turn to page 106)

One error, only one, is allotted to each member of the antelope family.

The FRIENDS YOU

A journey toward the heart of Africa in the company of a war pilot who now, at times, is a hunter and delights least in the encounters which call for a shot—

IT was mentioned several times while I was in Khartoum last fall that the area of the British Sudan is a million square miles. But that meant little or nothing to me. When talk about either miles or money soars to such dizzy and romantic altitudes, something in my brain snaps with a sound like the twang of a G string on a tin banjo. That mammoth array of square miles is dragged in here merely for the benefit of geographers and stockbrokers and statisticians and other strong swimmers who take delight in wallowing in giant figures.

But when Captain Brocklehurst, game commissioner of the Sudan, remarked that a three weeks' trek by camel-caravan would put me in good lion country, he had descended to my own patois. That—I could understand.

I inquired at once:

"What unsung garden-spot in this great expanse of—er—how many cubic million—never mind! What particular Garden of Eden harbors those so-voracious and unshot lions?"

Brock pulled the big map down from the wall. The sheet, I saw, had been divided by heavy blue pencil-marks into little square areas like miniature box-stalls. Here was a stall with the words "*giant-eland, greater kudu, elephant,*" written across it. Here was another sacred to hartebeest, tiang, sitatunga and cob. And a long way below Khartoum was another box-stall with the single word "*Lion*" scrawled across it with a heavy blue pencil.

"There," said Brock, with his finger on the place, "is your best chance for lion—along the Abyssinian border on the upper reaches of the River Rahad. But if you go there—don't cross the border! And when near the border watch your step! If you meet a band of tall strangers with skins the color of burnished copper, a devil-may-care spring to the step and a spear or an ancient smoothbore musket in either the right or the left hand—those will be Abyssinians. Remember, there isn't a surveyor in all Abyssinia, so if they see you first, then no matter where you happen to be, you're on their side of the border, where the game law on white men is never closed. A jolly trip, and the best o' luck to you."

I had trekked across Abyssinia once, and I knew something of those brown barefoot boys. That angle of it didn't— But this is not a story of Abyssinians, so we can open a gate and shove them out.

Much might be said about preparations: the hiring of a cook, a tentboy, a syce, three camel-packers, three "*hamla*" or pack-camels and one big bull riding-camel. More might be written of villages passed, turbaned sheiks, tribes encountered; the Beni Amir and their slim handsome camels; the wild Hadendowas, those bonny fighters who broke the British square, the Fuzzy-Wuzzies of Kipling's ballad. A world of anthropology-on-the-hoof, colorful

It was poor headwork to attempt to sneak past that incarnation of fury.

FIND *in the* BUSH

by James G. Baum

Illustrated by Paul Bransom

and bizarre, roams about those sandy plains. But the animals of the Sudan are more interesting than the natives, and they happen to be the subject of this story.

Followed three weeks of steady trekking—three weeks of heat, thirst, thornbush, ticks, flies, mosquitoes, fever, and of a sun that falls like a dead weight upon the shoulders. Interminable marches along wide elephant-trails through fifteen-foot grass. The unending sway and lurch of that bull riding camel. Weeks of the usual hell-on-earth enjoyments that draw some of us idiots back to the African "blue" more than once. And then, as our best writers would say, "the devoted little caravan" arrived at the Rahad River about ten miles from the Abyssinian border—Brocklehurst's blue-penciled lion-stall.

Here for the first time we made a permanent camp. I say *we* in the spirit that Lindbergh used the word. I mean myself and the bull riding-camel, Spirit of St. Simon. The other six humans were camp appendages only, and their names, if you're interested, were Arabi, Haroun,—no kin to the late Haroun al Raschid,—the cook Osman, a peculiar wight; Abdullahi, a born alarmist given to strange and needless panics, a man destined to die many times before his death; and—I believe you had hopes for a moment that at last here was a band of Arabs without a Mohammed in it—I add with regret, Mohammed Zaïn and Mohammed Ali.

More weeks rolled by. Endless days in the African bush will do strange things to the imagination of a lone hunter. In the absence of white men with whom to exchange observations upon the small happenings of the day, you turn for entertainment to the animals. You come to know, after a while, that they have distinctive personalities, that all members of one species are not exactly alike as you had always supposed. In a permanent camp, very often, you become quite intimately acquainted with your smaller neighbors—baboons, monkeys, reedbuck, oribi and duiker, bush-dwellers that seldom move from one locality to another.

I remember with real affection a certain duiker that afforded me entertainment for ten days near this camp. Although full grown, the dainty antelope was no taller than a setter dog. Each day about noon he came with his family to drink at the river. The doe and fawn always left him two hundred yards from camp, and making a wide detour, arrived at the river some distance away. But my friend, a daring individualist, took keen delight in sneaking past, no more than forty yards to the side. He crept along with his back sunk low, watching us out of the corner of his eye like a crafty fox. Safely past, he straightened to his full but diminutive height, and with tiny head held high looked back in triumph for a moment, fully convinced that he had accomplished a remarkable feat. And sometimes he added a derisive snort, as if to say:

"There, I told that panicky family of mine I could do it! Now aren't you two-legged simpletons ashamed of yourselves!"

He had a great opinion of his own cleverness, did that duiker. But on the tenth day he failed to appear. The doe and fawn, more shy and alert than before, came along and passed in a wide circle. The added nervousness showed that they had been badly frightened.

"This unusual situation looks gloomy for my friend," I thought. "Perhaps he has tried his cleverness on the wrong party."

One error, and only one, is allotted to each member of the antelope family in Africa. The first mistake is very apt to be fatal.

I was worried. Later in the day I went to look for him. A set of well-cleaned duiker bones, and the pug-marks of a leopard in the dust told the story. My duiker friend had made his mistake. It was extremely poor headwork to attempt to sneak past that mottled incarnation of fury, the master-sneak of them all. The grim cat that has not a trace of humor in his system had caught and pulled him down.

I felt that I had known that duiker intimately. I had even named him for an acquaintance at home, and that common, everyday wilderness tragedy took on an exaggerated seriousness in my mind. I hunted that leopard with the relentless determination of Old Man Nemesis himself. It became a family feud; and at last I got him—bushwhacked and shot him down in cold blood, as a policeman shoots a mad-dog in the street. And as the spotted murderer lay gasping out his life in the grass, I put another and entirely unnecessary bullet through his heart—not in a spirit of humanity but with a gloating and vindictive jerk of the trigger that was nothing but pure revenge. In the lonesomeness I considered that duiker with his human weaknesses a member of the family. . . . .

One morning the Arabs were busy loading the pack-camels with that slow deliberation that marked them all as born gentlemen of leisure. I was in no hurry, for the first *tchid* or lap of the day's march was to be short, and there was no occasion for haste. The work was proceeding quietly while I sat smoking a last pipe upon the edge of my cot, taking things easy until the men should be ready to pack the cot. At a slight noise in the thornbush behind me I turned, to behold a bull giraffe of vast proportions, a weird grotesque of legs and neck wrapped in what appeared to be black and yellow tapestry. He lurched through the scattered trees in that slow, shuffling walk so characteristic of the breed. He had not yet seen us in the thick undergrowth of thorn, and he was headed straight for camp.

I was rubbing the stubble on my chin with a careless hand at the moment, and had just decided that a shave was in order when camp should be pitched in the evening. A fifteen-foot barber's pole of a neck rearing itself above the thorn no more than thirty yards away was the first thing that struck my eye. The old relic of the Pleistocene must have been dreaming of dinosaurs, plesiosaurs and other playmates of his forefathers, for he came hitching along unconscious of danger. His expression was so vacant, so absentminded—and I knew that in the next second he was due for such an utter surprise—that I chuckled in happy expectation.

Then he saw us! That outlandish neck swung to its full height with a startled jerk. The giraffe seemed, all at once, to grow yards taller. The most idiotically scandalized expression came over that thin-nosed face. If giraffes had vocal cords and could make a sound, there is no telling what awful shrieks would have rung through the woods. The little tail went up. The vacant expression of the gentle eyes, eyes as soft and melting as those of a beautiful-but-dumb señorita of the south of Spain, changed instantly to a stare of absolute funk. The old relic almost fell over backward in his hurry to get away from that place.

To me, at the moment, with my mind on a stubby beard and razors in the evening, he was not a game animal but a traveling barber making his morning rounds. And that harlequin neck, colored in the striking fashion of the ultra-modern school of decoration, was nothing but a cartoon-comic of the pole before the barber's shop. I laughed loudly. The proper greeting that I should have given to that morning caller did not come to me until later.

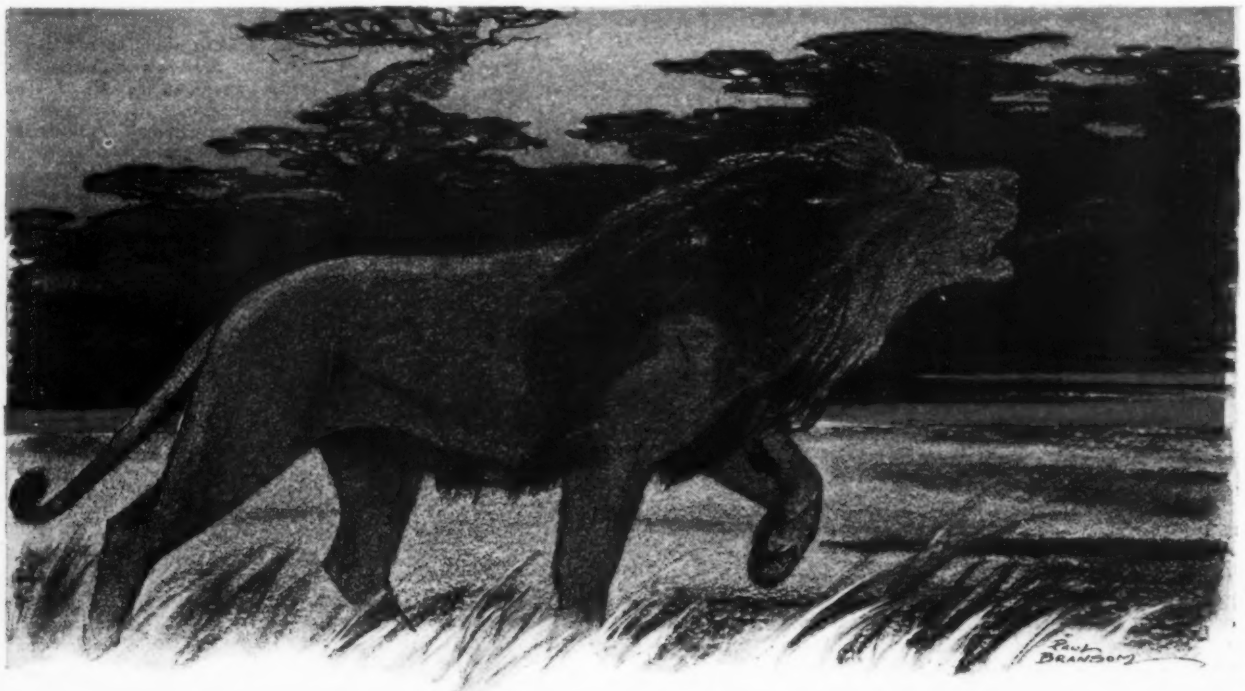
And then I reconstructed the incident as it should have been:

I doffed my hat; I bared my head;
I said with pleasant ease:
"I see your sign, your barber's-pole,
A-waving in the breeze.
I'll gladly pay the union scale;
A shave and haircut, please.

"You are the first I've ever met
Of all your vain profession,
Who could not make of bootless talk
A boring, dull obsession.
You have no voice, no vocal cords,
Thank God, in your possession!"

And so I sat expectantly
Upon my folding bed.
"O welcome gift of gracious Fate,
Come on and cut!" I said.
And stripped off coat and vest and shirt,
And bared a shaggy head.

But the giraffe, satisfied from his scrutiny that I had before done those things which I ought not to have done, and thinking that I might again, wheeled and broke into a loose-jointed, lumbering gallop. I use the word *broke* advisedly, for he seemed literally to come apart as he got under way. His front legs were timed in



With majestic tread Almighty Voice sauntered toward us, as if he held a deed to the entire Sudan.

It may have been curiosity, but I shall always claim the music held them spellbound.

their action independently of his hind parts; it was only the grace of God that held him together. And the last I saw of him was that spotted barber's-pole of a neck carrying aloft, like an ensign on a flagstaff, the little head with its harmless caricatures of horns bobbing among the high branches of the open forest. He could have saved himself the effort, however, for there was no war between us. He might have stretched his lanky bones in peace beside our camels without the slightest danger to his mottled hide.

To a man alone in the bush, baboons and monkeys are a constant and never-failing source of amusement. They are the king's jesters, although they do not mean to be. You awake usually at that period of hush before the dawn when all the world seems waiting for the miracle to happen. As at a signal, the great litany of celebration that comes a moment before the sun bursts from the open forest on every side—an indescribable confusion of praise addressed to a hundred different gods. Strange cries echo through the woods, and eager bird-songs gush forth in salutation to the sun. Soon, perhaps, a monkey troop comes rollicking past, trailing tails in arched and mirth-provoking curves. The arching tail is a flaunted signal to his brothers that the wearer is in blithe and jovial mood; it is a guarantee of playfulness as true and dependable as the striped cap upon the head of any human clown. The eccentric kinks of that tail form a plain advertisement of the owner's mood; any sort of well intentioned horse-play will go with him.

But let a warning bark of danger break the spell, and instantly all chatter ceases. Eyes grow vigilant and beady. Tails stiffen and lose that curve of humor. Muscles tense, and every body line denotes readiness for action; death is real, and life is grim and very hard.

On the opposite side of the river, late every afternoon, a troop of baboons trekked past this camp. Their habits were as regular as those of an old bachelor club-man. Indeed, those baboons had their own club in the deep shade of a giant wild fig tree that rose in a noble arch across the stream.

Promptly as trained commuters that baboon troop came foraging along the other bank one afternoon. I heard their chatty, gay remarks long before they came in view. First arrived the scouts, five or six old males, marching slowly and stopping now and then to listen. It was their job to blaze the way and watch for any sudden movement in the brush, and to listen for a sound that might betoken the presence of that dreaded fury the leopard. Their post was one of danger, and therefore honor in the tribe was theirs. And how well they knew it! They marched with a burly swagger, shoulders proudly rolling to their step. Heads were up and tails were carried in a high curve, an arch of triumph out behind.

Upon arrival at the giant tree, one sharp of eye climbed to a lofty branch and perched sedately in a crotch. The other scouts sat promptly on their hunkers in the shade. The rank and file, noisy as a band of romping schoolboys, soon arrived. The younger set chattered and ran back and forth in games of monkey-tag, but the very young, the infant class, were mounted and arrived in state perched on their mothers' backs. The oldsters rested in the shade as dignified as Arabs sitting by a fire, and watched the youngsters dash about at nimble games. But the patriarchs of that socialistic troop, those of fame and some distinction, the heads of families with burdens of responsibility, sat with folded arms on placid stomachs and looked upon the world in great content.

Sitting there beneath the tree like gaffers in a village square, they made a homely picture that called to mind the ancient tree at Selbourn that Gilbert White so pleasantly described:

"In old times there was a vast oak with short, squat body and huge horizontal arms extending almost to the extremity of the area. This venerable tree, surrounded with stone steps, and seats above them, was the delight of old and young, and a place of much resort on summer evenings, where the former sat in grave debate, while the latter frolicked and danced before them. Long might it have stood, had not the amazing tempest in 1703 overturned it at once."

A sharp bark of alarm came from the gimlet-eyed sentry in the branches! *Qui vive!* What a sudden transformation! Silence—not a movement. Even babes in arms were still, long ago cuffed into understanding the gravity of such alarms. Accustomed to the strictest obedience from birth, here was no petulant, spoiled or peevish one, "Mewling and pewking in his nurse's arms," to advertise his whereabouts to a silent, creeping enemy. But this time there was no danger. A bull waterbuck strolled beneath the tree and looking cautiously around picked his thirsty way to water for a drink.

A barren beach of sand lined the river for a mile. The presence of the baboon troop with a keen-eyed picket posted in the spreading tree appeared to give the bull much confidence. He drank leisurely and stood ruminating, perhaps upon the dangers of a stroll. At length he walked in open view along a sandy bar, upstream. A lion or leopard with half an eye might have marked his progress and crept ahead concealed in brush, and hurled himself, a living thunderbolt, upon those sloping shoulders. The bull knew this as well as I, and stopped each fifteen yards or so to turn his head and look and listen and sniff the wandering breeze. He

may have known the baboon signal of alarm and kept a wary ear cocked back to catch the first disturbing note.

But all was safe. The sun sank low. The baboons romped and played, or argued like omadhauns at the Dublin fair, while the few patriarchs squatted at ease and watched the proceedings coolly from their higher plane of experience. The waterbuck advanced along the stream until he reached a point where tainted air from camp was wafted to his path. One sniff of this, one mighty bound, a reckless scramble through the stones, a noble leap to the shelving bank, and he was gone like wind along the waste.

The baboons heard the rattling stones, the flying sand, the crash of broken brush. They saw him pass with spurning feet but could not know the cause. They gathered in a close-packed mob and listened for some following disturber. They had no idea what was wrong, but with wise discretion the signal for retreat was blown, the baboon "Boots and Saddles."

There was mounting in hot haste. Babies sprang to mothers' backs, and the troop set out in some confusion through the bush. A moment later, when the herd was out of sight, I forgot the sentry in his hidden post among the leaves and stood in plain view upon the river-bank. A clear and sharp distinctive bark, the picket's musket-shot, rang out to warn the fleeing troop that danger had indeed appeared and speed was now in order. The wise old man, barking as he came, swung down from his lookout station and loped away to overtake the rest. And I knew that he would climb another tree, farther on, and watch with Argus eye to warn again if I should follow on the trail.

The price of life is vigilance, and that in turn is aided by a thing we moderns sometimes think is new, a product of our industrial age. But after all, we might have learned from baboons in the Neolithic age the strength of team-work and the gracious boon of simple organization.

While on the subject of baboons, it becomes necessary to confess a secret sin. With other warped and stunted instincts I have a trifling, childish ear for music. Arias, diapasons and the complicated harmonies of great operas leave me dull and stolid, like a full-fed bovine lying in a pasture. My idea of a musical heaven is to recline on fields of asphodel in the shade, and listen forever to innumerable shiny darkies plucking at unbreakable strings on foolproof banjos, with now and then a few thousand old-time cowhands blowing their brains out on mouth-organs. So always upon a lonesome journey through a tuneless wilderness I pack along my secret sin—a wheezing tin harmonica.

One day that tin atrocity was in my pocket as I hunted down the river alone. The sun climbed high, and the day became too hot for anything sane to be astir.

In stealth I took the wheezer out,—the stealth was force of habit acquired in the haunts of scornful men,—and lying with my back against a tree, "I roar you as gently as any sucking dove; I roar you, and 'twere any nightingale." What? Chromatic tortures? Caterwauling ululations? To you, perhaps. But to me with the stunted ear of infancy it was lively rhythm, a rollicking rime of sounds; the "Arkansaw Traveler," the ribald "Turkey" and the stirring wail of "Jesse James." We all have our weaknesses. Great Jove nods upon his throne occasionally, and even lovely Venus has her tiny mole.

I played and played—delightfully, I claim—until, cheered and braced but sadly out of wind, I turned and glanced around. Behind me, crouching by a fallen log, appeared the head and listening ears of a baboon cognoscente. A short way off others rallied round with guilty looks as if ashamed that anyone should know their vulgar taste in tunes.

They saw me as the music ceased, and turned to move away. I seized the instrument again and wrung the strains of "Danny Deever" from its stubborn vitals. The baboons stopped; every one of them sat down and peered and turned his head to catch the faintest sounds. There must have been two dozen or more in the troop, and one small babe-in-arms wailed discordantly. A male, perhaps a parent, glowered at the child. Its mother took the hint and cuffed it soundly: it was as if a human child, dragged against its will to hear a noble orchestra, had whimpered at a gay and airy part, and its mother, fearful of the master's righteous anger, had spanked and muzzled it to silence.

Such thoughtful veneration was flattering unction to my soul. Salved and poulticed, as it were, by such a triumph, I blew and blew while hairy gallery gods drank in the sounds like mother's milk. It may have been no more than prying curiosity, but I shall always claim, in spite of scientific testimony and the envious scoffs of nonmusical naturalists, that the music by itself was all that held them spellbound in a sort of baboon ecstasy. But my second wind gave out. I rang the curtain down amid a storm of barks that doubtless, in the baboon tongue, were loud demands for encores. The audience departed filled, I hope, with noble sentiments and good resolutions.

We moved camp up the Rahad to a place of big trees where the river made a wide bend, and there we made a second permanent camp. There were many lions in that area. But they were wild and wise. None of your tame Tanganyika tabbies that apparently pose for you with all the coy insouciance of a flapper before a battery of cameras. For three weeks hardly a night passed without the deep organ tones of their roaring. From one o'clock in the morning until four they pounded the welkin with the regularity of the old clock on the stairs. They came to the river to drink every night about three, then trailed back into the high grass and thornbush just before dawn. They knew to a minute when the light would be strong enough to show a front sight clearly. And in daylight they simply were nonexistent, extinct. I should like to be as well educated as those Rahad lions! They were post-graduate lions. Indeed, they were Phi Beta Kappa lions.

Day after day I hunted them through the thornbush, a game of hide-and-seek without even the encouragement of a sight of one. In that terrific heat such luck is discouraging. The days passed in endless succession. And then one night, at that witching hour, "when graveyards yawn and hell itself breathes out contagion to this world," I awoke, like *Abou ben Adhem,* from a deep dream of peace. The silence of the open forest had about it something eerie, unearthly. No breeze stirred the leaves on the thorntrees. No fish, no crocodile, splashed in the oily waters of the river. No nightbird called to break the unfathomable stillness.

The usual guard-fires around camp burned brightly; and Mohammed Ali, his cotton burnous around his head, sat hunched before the nearest fire. The camels, hobbled with ropes of twisted bark, chewed refillable cuds in the center of camp with the steady grind of tireless teeth. The moon, seen dimly through the trees, was a fainting ghost falling through a sea of molten copper. If ever spooks walked abroad upon the earth, they must have held a gala parade that night along the Rahad. An electric quality seemed to pervade the silence of the outer darkness. I had the feeling that the world was waiting for something; and then—the rumble of a lion perhaps a half-mile down the river began in a series of abysmally deep grunts that shook the heavy atmosphere as a man would shake water in a bottle. The roars swelled in volume, and then gradually died away and became almost inaudible in a diffused ocean of sound so low in the scale that the ear could barely detect it. At this point a second lion took up the business and carried it to new heights until, at the peak of his efforts, it seemed to me that the very leaves on the thorntrees must be shaken from the branches.

The midnight voice of a lion has a strange power to impress a man with a sense of his own insignificance. After the first stentorian salvos a man no longer even subconsciously regards himself as the hub of all the universe. He loses that feeling of importance and smug conceit that many of us put on in the morning with our clothes.

The two lions prowled for an hour along the river-bank, and royally they drank at leisure and boasted of a hundred midnight kills; then sauntered slowly off, roaring *(Please turn to page 108)*

PETER B. KYNE

Soldier, adventurer and author; he is a man's man—writing for men. That's one reason, undoubtedly, why his stories are popular also with women.

The creator of "Cappy Ricks" and author of "The Valley of the Giants" returns to Redbook next month with a series of great short stories, of which the first is "Mitherless," a story of a horse and men—and of a woman too.

Look for Kyne regularly in Redbook

"This girl's no pickpocket!" said the woman. The floorwalker opened the hand-bag.

Let's Eat—

by Paul *and* Alma Ellerbe

Illustrated by J. Sands Brunner

BETH WATSON was a good little soul, but she was hungry. The pigskin wallet sticking out of the hip pocket of the man just ahead of her in the department-store aisle fascinated her.

She was also cold—she didn't have on clothes enough. But they were all she had. She had answered seventeen help-wanted ads that day, and she ached in every bone. She had had a thin time of it always, but for the first time in her nineteen years, life had her on the run. For the first time she was afraid to think. She had to have money immediately, or— It was that *"or"* she was afraid to think about. Something that had been hard in her—something she had lived on—was turning to water.

She hadn't come into the department-store to buy anything; there wasn't even the price of a night's lodging in her worn old handbag; she had come in to get warm. The very middle of her seemed frozen.

She tried not to see the wallet, but it stuck out so invitingly between the tails of the man's coat, and the man so plainly could afford to lose it. The price of the clothes he wore would have kept her going six months—the diamond on his finger for about three years.

It was the busiest hour of the afternoon, but in this part of the store the tide of customers, never quite so thick as elsewhere, had momentarily subsided, and only a few people drifted along the quiet aisles. Beth had to keep moving somewhere or go on out again. She drifted too, just behind the pocketbook, pretending not to see it, looking instead at the people around her, unconsciously sizing them up: a gentle-faced little old woman in black, two cheaply smart flappers engrossed in their own chatter, a solid, gray, elderly man, intent upon his purchases.

If a moment hadn't come when the little old woman was fumbling after a handkerchief, the flappers had disappeared and the elderly man had turned his back, she wouldn't have taken the pocketbook. But in the moment everything fell suddenly crystal clear, as it does sometimes to the dying. She ceased to be Beth Watson; she was only hunger about to be fed.

She took the pocketbook with one quick movement that ended in her handbag, and went on her way, neither fast nor slow, as though she had just bought the pigskin pocketbook instead of stealing it.

And then the moment passed, and she was herself again—a pretty, pinch-faced, fragile little thing who had never done anything really wrong in all her life before. Her rush of feeling checked her. She stopped and pretended to examine service-weight bargain silk stockings; and there, at the same counter, was the little old woman. Had she followed her on purpose?

"You look tired," the little old woman said. "Why don't you go to the ladies' waiting-room and rest?"

It was no time for kindness.

(Please turn to page 136)

"I heard the port door of the smoking-saloon open. I didn't see anyone, but I saw a hand."

The MURDERS ON THE SHIP

The New York police have made repeated attempts to reach by radio the S.S. Eastern Bay, far out at sea. They have failed because, first, the wireless operator was murdered. And then, on board the ship, came the startling sequel.

by Rufus King

Illustrated by F. R. Gruger

The Story So Far:

MR. GANS, the wireless operator, went out along the darkened deck on his way to deliver the message in code he had just written down, and the inquisitive passenger who had been loafing in the wireless-room went with him. He had learned that the *Eastern Bay*, a small ship running from Bermuda to Halifax, carried no relief operator.

"That's phosphorus, isn't it?" the inquisitive passenger asked pausing by the deserted rail.

Mr. Gans looked in the direction pointed out by the man's finger.

"I don't see what you mean, sir."

The man's fingers started to close about Mr. Gans' thin neck.

"Just keep on looking," he said softly, "and you'll see." . . . .

It was one of the spinster Misses Sidderby who stumbled over Gans' body a little later. But of course it was Lieutenant Valcour of the New York police, one of the dozen or so other passengers, who took charge of the case. Valcour had already confided in Captain Sohme the reason for his presence aboard the *Eastern Bay:*

A prominent man had been murdered in New York City; the only eyewitness had also been attacked and was still unconscious. An unfinished letter lost on the scene of the crime, however, was addressed to a certain woman of great wealth and curious blonde beauty—a Mrs. Victor Barton, who had suddenly remarried in Bermuda, and who with her new young husband Mr. Poole, was a passenger aboard the *Eastern Bay.*

Later Valcour interviewed Mrs. Poole—showed her the unfinished letter that had been found addressed to her. It read:

"Death comes again ana again when one is young, even though the body does not die. I know where you are and I am coming to you because—"

"It is the same handwriting as that on the envelope," she said. "It is not familiar. It doesn't mean anything to me at all. Why should it?"

"There are lots of reasons why it should, Mrs. Poole. The way we consider it at Headquarters is that the man who wrote it followed you down here, to get in touch with you. I believe that he killed Mr. Gans tonight, and I think that he did it to prevent the delivery of a wireless message that contained a description of himself. . . . . Mrs. Poole, the man who was robbed and killed in New York last week was your first husband."

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But Mrs. Poole either could not remember or would not acknowledge knowing anyone who would have had reason to murder her first husband or to pursue her on board this ship. . . . . Because Valcour made her believe she was in danger, however, she did make a new will, leaving her great fortune to her new and fifth husband, Ted Poole.

Valcour was forced to look elsewhere for information—and got it, from Mrs. Poole's stolid Swedish maid Anna Wickstod, who had been with Mrs. Poole since her first marriage, twenty years before. For Anna told him among other things of a child called Toody whom Mrs. Poole had informally adopted, cherished all too fondly for a time, and then—because a later husband, a Mr. Jones, did not care for children—sent away at the age of nine to be brought up by strangers. The cast-off child had been given an allowance, but of late the checks had been returned. . . . .

Valcour thanked Anna Wickstod and left her; and he wondered, as he walked along the dim and deserted passage, which man among the men passengers was a woman.

Ted Poole had slept late and only got out of his berth and started shaving when a shipboard acquaintance drifted in. They were chatting casually, Poole's eyes fixed on the mirror, when the visitor took from his pocket a thimble in which a needle had been fixed with wax, and holding it in the palm of his hand, fixed his eyes on the nape of Poole's neck—and struck deftly. "Neat!" he said to himself as he slipped out of the stateroom after lifting the body to the berth and throwing needle and thimble out the porthole. . . . .

It was that same day; Miss Sidderby was looking after the stricken Mrs. Poole; Valcour and Captain Sohme had sat down to a belated lunch after a preliminary investigation of this second murder—when the Captain noticed that the ship was rolling in the trough of the sea. Going on deck with Valcour, he found the helmsman as well as the second officer, Mr. Swithers, had been knocked unconscious and the wheel lashed—insecurely with a landsman's knots. And the safe in the Captain's cabin had been robbed of the ship's money—more than two thousand dollars in gold. *(The story continues in detail:)*

CABLE from Commissioner of the New York Police Department to port authorities at Bermuda:

REQUEST YOU ADVISE US WHETHER COMMERCIAL OR GOVERNMENTAL PLANE CAN BE CHARTERED OUR EXPENSE TO FOLLOW NORMAL COURSE SS EASTERN BAY AND ATTEMPT DROP CODE MESSAGE INCLUDED IN OUR PREVIOUS CABLE ON HER DECK STOP REALIZE ATTEMPT MUST BE MADE BY PLANE FROM BERMUDA IMMEDIATELY OR NOT AT ALL STOP AGAIN EMPHASIZE URGENCY OF CASE STOP IF UNFAVORABLE WEATHER CONDITIONS OR OTHER CAUSES PREVENT PLEASE ADVISE US AT ONCE AND WE WILL TRANSFER OUR EFFORTS TO UNITED STATES COASTAL RADIO STATIONS AND AIRPORTS STOP REALIZE AND APPRECIATE FULLY EXTENT OF YOUR COOPERATION

The inquiry began at half-past two. At Valcour's request (it amounted to insistence, almost) Captain Sohme was present. It gave, Valcour told him, an official character to the proceeding which it otherwise would have lacked. Personally, Captain Sohme did not want to be there at all; he wanted to be with the recovered Mr. Swithers, while he and the chief steward were searching the passengers' cabins and the ship for the stolen gold.

Valcour sat beside Captain Sohme at the forward end of the small lounge. The leaden sky and air made of it a cubicle of

"You know how it works?" he asked. "Yes sir," she answered. "This is the safety catch."

murk that the ceiling lights, which had been turned on, scarcely affected at all, and the sea was a woman's glass with the ship a tense, unhappy atom creeping, turn by turn, along its flat insensate floor.

"Everything," said Valcour, "is known on board a ship." His voice was quiet, and yet it carried to the further corner of the saloon where Mr. Dumarque and Mr. Wright were seated on a cushioned settee. His eyes rested lightly on the Sanfords and the Misses Sidderby (the maid had taken the elder Miss Sidderby's place in watching Mrs. Poole), who were grouped about a table, and then passed on to Mr. Stickney and young Force, who, at a smaller table, were engaged in smoking an endless chain of cigarettes. "By everything," Valcour went on, "I mean ordinary happenings and events. And that is why this inquiry will differ so radically from any that would have been conducted were we ashore."

"You're darn well tootin' it will, so far as I'm concerned," said Mr. Stickney. "If you've got any idea in your head, Valcour, that you're going to put me through any third-degree stuff, you're all wet."

"I'm sorry that you persist in this attitude, Mr. Stickney. None of us can force you to answer any questions, but I wish you would let me point out why it would be advantageous for you to do so."

"You can point until you're sick, Valcour, but you'll never do it."

"You're a business man, aren't you, Mr. Stickney?"

"I'll say I am."

"Then why adopt the attitude of an hysterical woman?"

"What?"

"Well, aren't you?"

"What in the hell—excuse me, ladies. Are you crazy, Valcour?"

"Mr. Sanford was looking through one of the portholes."

"Almost." Valcour smiled pleasantly. "We'll all be crazy in a day or two if this business isn't cleared up. What is the reason for your not wanting it to be cleared up, Mr. Stickney?"

"Mad—he's cuckoo—"

"Completely; but apart from that, Mr. Stickney, why, if you do want it cleared up, wont you help us?"

"How in the—"

"Hell," said Miss Sidderby. "You might just as well say it, Mr. Stickney. I know how dreadfully hard it is, in moments of stress, to keep repressed. I'm sure that Mrs. Sanford and Ella wont mind, in view of the distressing circumstances, if you indulge in—well, a few outlets."

Mr. Stickney clamped his teeth down on the cigarette and a small portion of his tongue. "Hell!" he said, and Mrs. Sanford, for the third time, drew in a sharp breath and closed her eyes. "All right, Valcour, start right ahead and pin this stuff on me."

Valcour's smile continued pleasant. "I wish that I could," he said. "Not from any personal animosity to you, Mr. Stickney, but in order to have the unpleasant affair settled. None of us likes to know that somewhere on this ship there is a person so utterly debased as to have committed that crime." His voice went carefully on through the gray stillness, like a curious weapon that was reaching for its target. "Committed it, and watched its pitiable result this morning. People who commit crimes like that must have a very limited vision. If they were to think for a single minute of the consequences, I don't believe they would ever commit them."

Mr. Dumarque's voice sifted softly from his distant corner. "Surely, Mr. Valcour, you are not claiming that any amount of advance thinking concerning the electric chair has ever proven to be a deterrent to murder?"

"I am not referring to the consequences to the criminal, Mr. Dumarque."

"But of course not." Mr. Dumarque's smile was a pale flash. "I am stupid. You are picturing the scene when, as in so many of your popular ballads during a past decade, the news was broken."

"Yes, Mr. Dumarque. I am thinking of the picture, as you call it, when the family and friends of Mr. Gans are informed that, because he momentarily obstructed some egotistical plan or desire, the life was choked out of his body, and his body, bundled in canvas, was chucked for shark-food into the sea. That's a picture for Gans' family and friends to remember—to go to sleep with, to wake up and live with every wretched day of their lives. Gans, you see, was lucky. It might have happened to some member of his family or to a friend, instead of to himself."

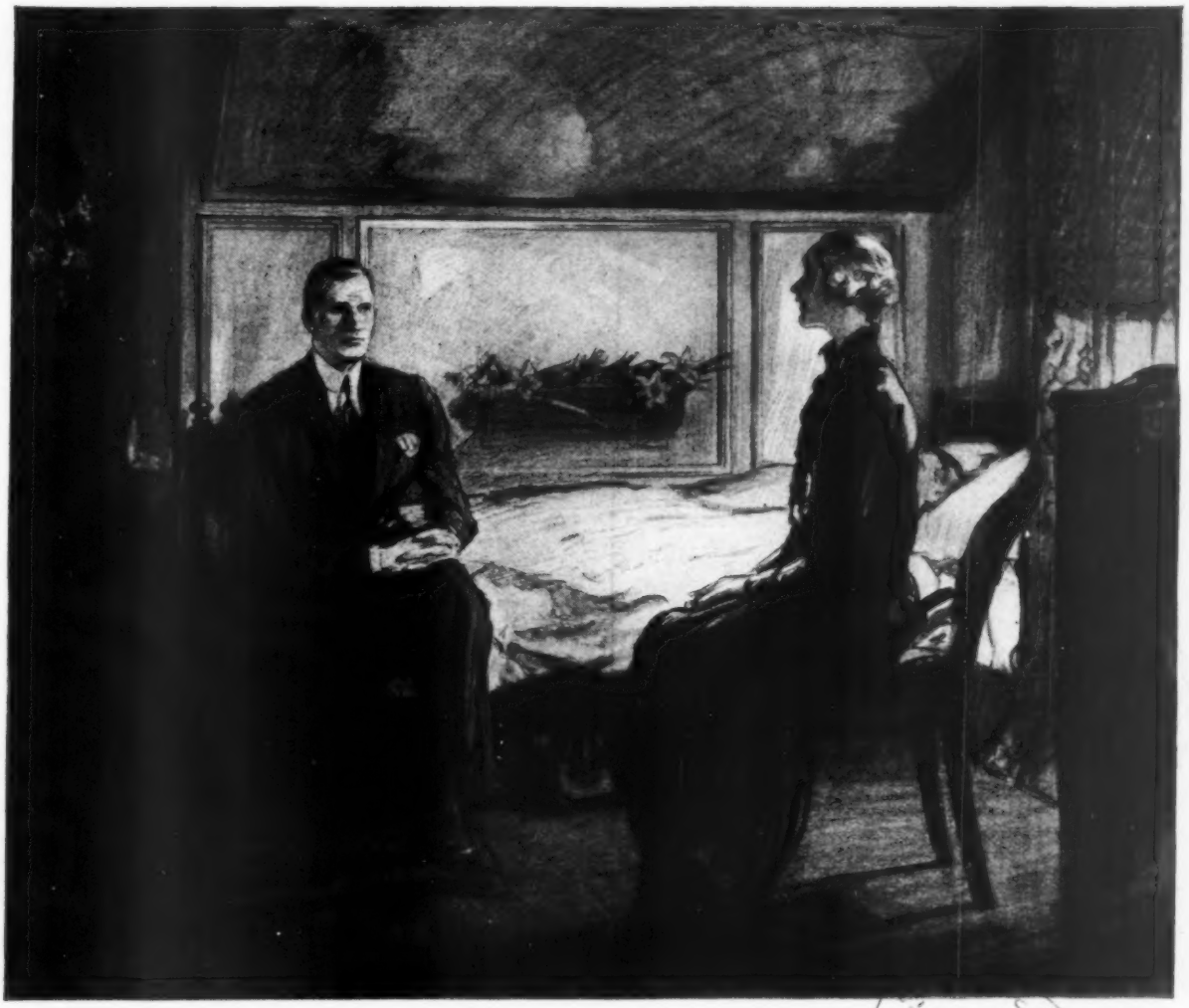
"You will forgive me, my dear Valcour, if my remark appeared in bad taste. I was viewing the subject academically."

"Wicked man—that wicked, wicked man," Mrs. Sanford was muttering; and Mr. Sanford, in whispered twitters, was saying: "Be still, Sue—be still. I beg of you be still—"

"And so as I said," Valcour's voice dominated the murmur, "everything is known on board a ship. Our community is like the most intimate of little villages, and being cut off entirely from our normal daily contacts and from broader affairs, we naturally focus sharply upon ourselves, our own little doings. That telepathy for gossip which is reputed to exist so acutely in small country communities becomes antiquated when compared with the system thriving on a ship: Miss Sidderby loses a thimble and a pair of sewing scissors, and it becomes important news; Mrs. Poole makes a will, and an extra is published about it; Mr. Dumarque finds conversing at night with one of the engine-crew's oilers amusing; Mr. Force has a taste for French literature and reads it in the original, which is annoying when the rest of us pick up his books and are unable to translate them; Mr. Wright drinks straight gin in his cabin before going to sleep—in order, theoretically, to put him to sleep but really because (everyone else believes) he's a victim of dipsomania. You see what I mean?"

"Quite," said Mr. Wright, not unbitterly; "but what are you driving at?"

"Just the lack of necessity for going into the facts on which this inquiry is based in detail. They are already familiar to all of us. We will begin by establishing as clearly as possible the location of each of us for the thirty minutes or so preceding Miss Sidderby's scream. That was at nine-thirty-three last night. I looked at my watch just before leaving the bridge-table. Mr.



"It's there, Mr. Valcour—that paper on the rack. I had intended having it buried with Ted."

Swithers has testified that he left Mr. Gans in the wireless-room at nine o'clock. It will simplify matters a good deal if each of you will let us know what you were doing between those periods. How about it, Mr. Stickney?"

Mr. Stickney, with a why-pick-on-me-first look, cleared his throat. "Starting at nine?"

"Yes, please—at nine."

"Well, at the risk of being set down as slated for a drunkard's grave, I'll admit that Charley had just brought me a highball in the smoking-saloon. 'Two bells, Mr. Stickney,' I remember him saying—that's how I know it was nine, see? And I said: 'Well, you must have been thinking about bells instead of fingers, Charley, when you mixed this drink—go raise it to ten o'clock.' Well, Charley's sort of dumb when it comes to catching hot ones like that, so I had to explain it to him, see? Then Charley went off to shoot some more poison into the highball."

"You stayed in there, Mr. Stickney?"

"Yes. What would I leave for?"

"Was anyone else in there with you?"

"Nobody but Sanford over there. He came in for a minute, and, I might add, seeing as how we're letting our back hair down, for a shot of straight rye."

("Horace!" . . . . "Hush, Sue—just a little lapse. I will explain.")

"Was Charley long in fixing the highball?"

"No—two minutes, I guess, and a couple of minutes for Sanford's pony."

"That carries you up to above five minutes past nine. Did Mr. Sanford stay with you while you finished your highball?"

"No. He sank his pony and went right out on deck."

"You still stayed in the smoking-room?"

"Sure. What would I leave for?"

"Was Charley with you?"

"Charley was out in the pantry shooting craps with the chief steward. He'd only come when I'd ring."

"Did you?"

"Ring?"

"Yes."

"I'll say I rang."

"How frequently, Mr. Stickney—if you don't mind letting us know?"

"Proud to. Three times. Three highballs, brother, and not out."

"At fairly regular intervals?"

"Like clockwork."

"Then the last highball must have coincided fairly well with Miss Sidderby's scream?"

"I'll say it did. My throat's still sore from having to make up its mind whether to swallow or not."

"What did you do, besides choking, when you heard that scream, Mr. Stickney?"

"Beat it right out on deck."

"By the starboard or port door?"

"Starboard."

"The side on which Mr. Gans' body was found."

"Check."

"Now, the smoking-saloon door is about fifty feet aft of that spot. When you went on deck, Mr. Stickney, did you see anyone?"

"He's a wicked man and he's lying in his teeth!" "Be still, Sue!"

"No." Stickney's reply was brusque.

Valcour stared at him curiously. "What is it that you do not care to add to that, Mr. Stickney?"

"What makes you think I should add something, Valcour?"

"Your manner."

"Well, I did hear the port door of the smoking-saloon open and slam shut, just before I hit the deck."

"Did you look back to see who it was?"

"Yes; I looked back."

"Who was it, Mr. Stickney?"

"You'll think I'm crazy, Valcour."

"Well, if I do, it will only even things up."

"I didn't see anyone, but I did see a hand."

"Was there anything peculiar about it?"

"Only the ring."

"Ring?"

"One of those mummified scarab rings."

"In fact," Mr. Dumarque said softly, "my ring."

"WHICH brings us," Valcour smiled, "to Mr. Dumarque."

"And," Mr. Dumarque murmured, "to his mummified ring."

"You have an explanation, I suppose?"

"Unfortunately, yes." Mr. Dumarque's soft voice, with its indefinable Latin accent, sifted clearly through the stillness. "You are familiar, my dear Valcour, with the difficulty of locating exactly any sudden sound at night, when one is at sea? A general direction, of course—but that is all."

"Yes, Mr. Dumarque?"

"So it was with me, upon hearing Miss Sidderby's compelling scream. It was, if Miss Sidderby will forgive me, a disembodied sound, and I assure you that it seemed to be coming from directly on top of me."

("He's a wicked man, and he's lying in his teeth, Horace." . . . . . "Be still, Sue!")

"Which naturally confused you."

"Yes, my dear Valcour, as you state so succinctly, the astonishing fact confused me."

"Just where were you at the time, Mr. Dumarque?"

"Reclining in a chair on the after-deck, Mr. Valcour."

Miss Sidderby drew in her breath sharply, and stared with wide eyes directly at Mr. Dumarque. Her lips tightened into a thin line.

"The after portion of the boat-deck, or of the main deck, Mr. Dumarque?"

"The boat-deck, Mr. Valcour." Mr. Dumarque smiled faintly. "I could scarcely, unless winged like Mercury, have reached the smoking-saloon door in time to astonish Mr. Stickney with my mummified ring had I been seated on the main deck."

"How long had you been sitting there, Mr. Dumarque?"

"Since immediately after supper."

"Alone?"

"I prefer not to say."

"That is of course as you think best."

"Well, I'll say," said Mrs. Sanford.

"I was afraid, dear lady, that you would," said Mr. Dumarque.

"He was sitting there talking," Mrs. Sanford went on, "with that dirty oiler."

Captain Sohme was startled into an: "That is against regulations."

"So I presumed, Captain, which is why I did not care to mention the matter. I should have stated, in fact, that I had been sitting there quite alone, were it not for a premonition that Mrs. Sanford had so expertly observed us as she passed."

"I cannot have oilers sitting on deck with passengers. Really, Mr. Dumarque, you astonish me. Why sit with oilers?"

"Why not? Have you ever sat with one, sir?"

"Hardly."

"Then you are a very fortunate man. You still have something left you in life to look forward to."

"What was this oiler's name?" Captain Sohme was only agreeable to one idea at a time, and the one thing he wanted at the moment was to get that oiler up on the carpet.

"I wasn't aware, Captain, that he had one. I rarely bother with names, unless I have to dine more than once with a person. But aren't we blinding ourselves with trifles? Let us advance upon the mountains, my dear Valcour! My distaste for the electric chair amounts almost to a vice."

"Our advance is somewhat limited, isn't it?" Valcour said. "You left us with the scream coming down directly on the top of your head."

"Ah, yes. It lifted me almost bodily from the chair; and for several seconds I was transformed into a freshly decapitated hen. It was, I believe, during that brief and astonishing phase that I opened the smoking-saloon door, exhibited my mummified ring (I shall always, from now on, think of it as such) for Mr. Stickney's bewilderment, and then permitted the door to slam shut again."

"You saw Mr. Stickney when you opened the door?"

"I did, and realized at once that that shriek"—Mr. Dumarque bowed gracefully in Mr. Stickney's direction—"could never, under any conceivable circumstances, have emanated from him."

"Yes?"

Mr. Dumarque circled a slender hand in the air. "I searched elsewhere."

"Did you get to the starboard side of the boat-deck, where the body was lying, by going aft or forward?"

Mr. Dumarque hesitated slightly, smiled, and then said: "Forward."

"You met some one?"

"Decisively. I was running, you see, and Mr. Wright was running too."

Valcour paused for a moment and then said: "In which direction was Mr. Wright running?"

"Inasmuch as we collided, my dear Valcour, my impression is that Mr. Wright must have been running in the opposite direction from myself."

"Mr. Wright was running aft?"

"Aft."

"About where did this collision take place?"

"Just before one reaches the forward end of the port side, I should say."

"Did either of you say anything?" Valcour said carefully.

"I believe so. I personally rarely miss an opportunity for speaking. We were both rather upset."

"Do you remember what was said, Mr. Dumarque?"

"Always, my dear Valcour. It is a habit that I was cursed

with at birth. My worst nightmares are inevitably composed of the preceding day's conversations. I believe that my opening remark was an exclamation, due to Mr. Wright's shoulder having just come into violent contact with my chest. It was"—Mr. Dumarque smiled reassuringly at Mrs. Sanford—"either 'Ah!' or 'Ha!' Mr. Wright, if I remember correctly, audibly listed several important members of the— But I am sure that that is inconsequent to this investigation."

"But was nothing said, Mr. Dumarque?"

"We did not, as you can imagine, actually stand there and converse. I was myself still under the spell of that shocking scream. We were together only during that brief period which it took to straighten ourselves out. Mr. Wright made only one lucid remark that I could recall."

"Yes?"

" 'Somebody,' Mr. Wright said, 'just pulled my asterisked cap down over my eyes.' "

Chapter Nineteen

Lat. 35° 12′ north
Long. 64° 29′ west

CABLE from Port Authorities at Bermuda to Commissioner of the New York police department:

WEATHER CONDITIONS EXISTING WITHIN WIDELY EXTENDED AREA OF PRESENT PROBABLE LOCATION SS EASTERN BAY REPORTED AS HEAVILY OVERCAST WITH LARGE AREAS FOG AND DRIZZLE STOP REGRET ANY ATTEMPT TO LOCATE SS EASTERN BAY BY AIRPLANE FROM THIS BASE WOULD BE COMPLETELY IMPOSSIBLE.

"WHY didn't you mention that fact to us before, Mr. Wright?" Valcour said.

Mr. Wright, with a handkerchief, removed some of the shininess from his pudgy face. He smiled weakly about the saloon. "After I got over being mad about it," he said, "it seemed kind of foolish."

"But surely you must have realized the importance of it, Mr. Wright?"

"Well, now, come to think of it, maybe I did."

"You saw who it was who did it?"

"No sir. I was sort of—well, mooning, I guess you'd call it, over the rail; and the first thing I knew some smart Aleck just reached and pulled my cap down over my face so I couldn't see a blessed thing." He cast a pair of first-class sheep's eyes toward the ladies. "I get kind of sentimental at night."

"Didn't you hear anybody approaching you?"

"Well, now, sir, I was all wrapped up in my thoughts."

"I don't understand this, Mr. Wright."

"Well, I should feel foolish if I had to tell you what I was thinking about, Mr. Valcour—"

"No, I don't mean that. Just where were you standing at the rail?"

"Right in the corner of it, up front."

"On the port side?"

"That's always been a mite confusing to me, Mr. Valcour—this port and starboard business, sir."

"Was it the corner opposite to the side on which the body was found?"

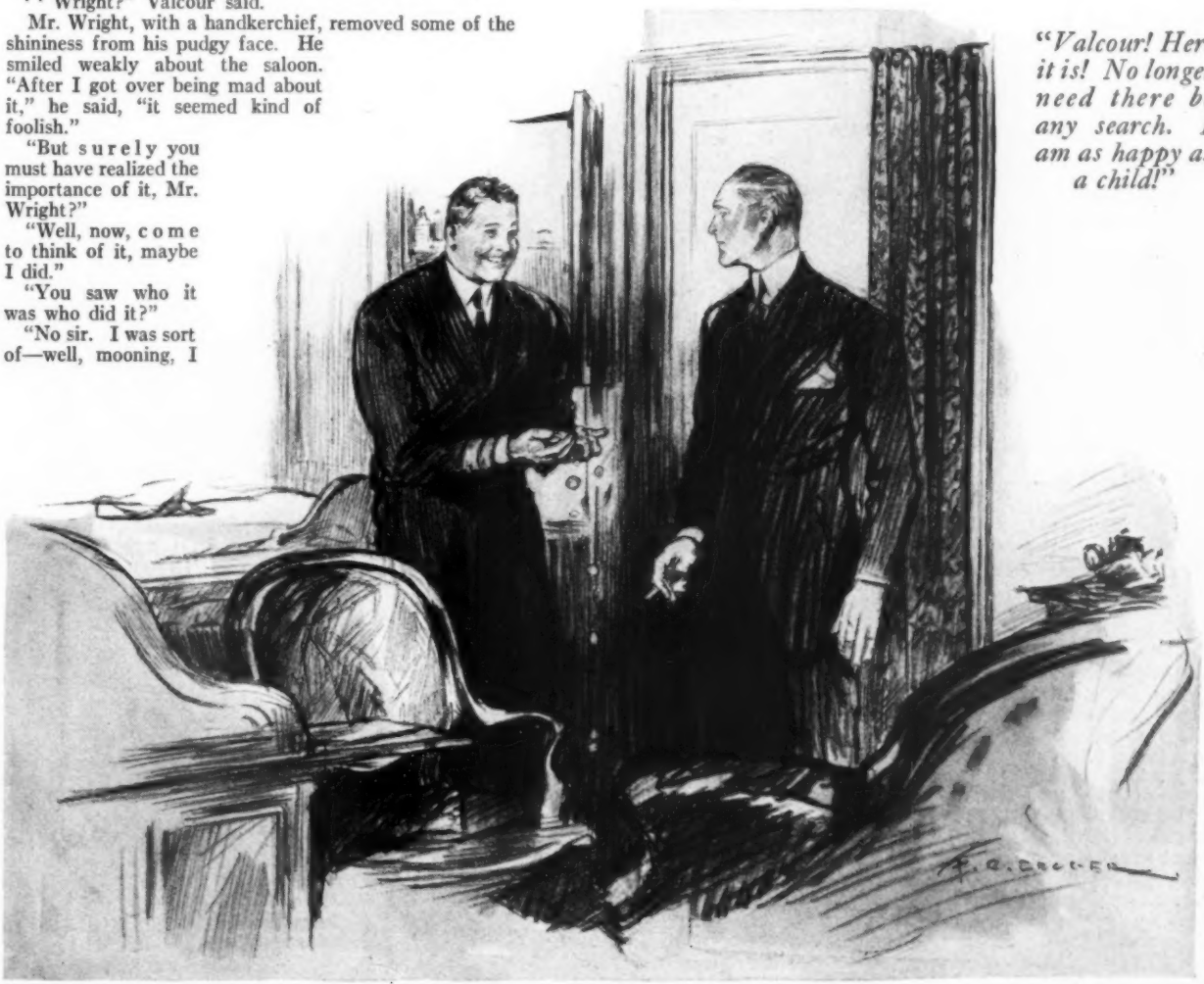
"Yes, it was that all right."

"Then what I don't understand is this: we will momentarily take it for granted that the person who pulled your cap down had just finished strangling Mr. Gans, had heard or seen Miss Sidderby coming forward along the starboard side of the deck, and was making his escape by going around to the port side. Why should he stop to go over to the corner where you were standing and pull your cap down? Your back was toward him, wasn't it, if you were leaning on the rail?"

Mr. Wright's blush was plainly visible even in the dim obscure light. "If you must know," he said, "I was singing."

"Singing?"

(Please turn to page 146)



"Valcour! Here it is! No longer need there be any search. I am as happy as a child!"

The AMAZING SPREAD of

"A great fortune is a great slavery" — Seneca

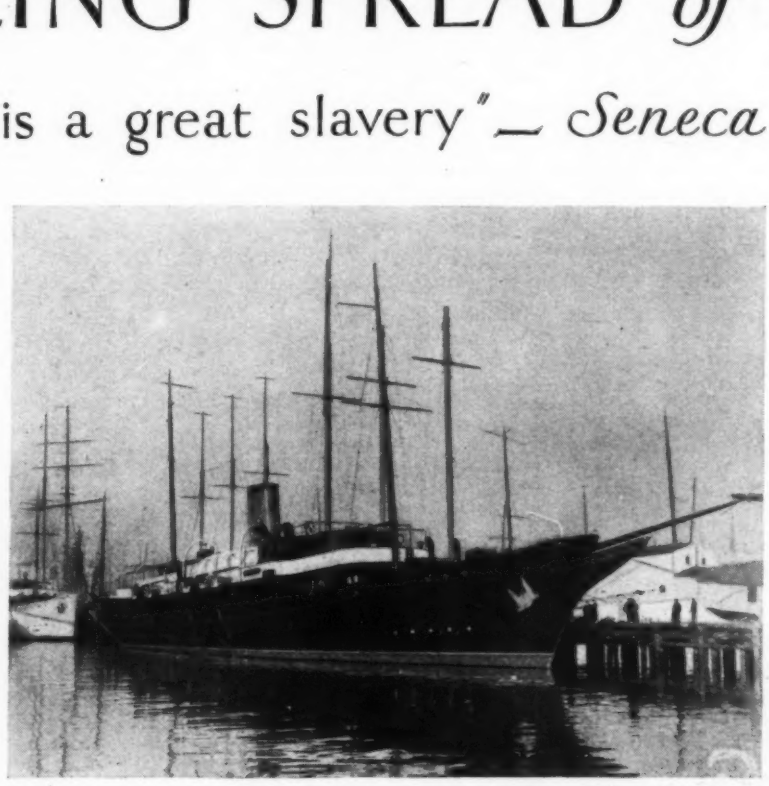
HOW HUGE INCOMES HAVE INCREASED

NUMBER of common or garden millionaires, with incomes of $50,000 a year or more, but less than $1,000,000 a year.

In 1927	23,790
In 1928	41,818

Million-a-year-income millionaires, paying tax on annual income of $1,000,000 or more.

In 1922	67	In 1926	231
In 1923	74	In 1927	283
In 1924	75	In 1928	496



Yachting has come back: the Vagabondia, built for W. L. Mellon.

AS I was walking along the east side of Union Square, close to the heart of Manhattan Island, one day not long ago, a strident voice attracted my attention. One of the group of men who had gathered in front of the communists' headquarters was shouting as he waved a newspaper:

"Twenty-four citizens of America have an average income of more than ten million dollars each! There are more than forty-one thousand millionaires in America! Do you wonder that so many of us go hungry, and that a New York policeman can kill a communist and get away with it? There'll be no chance for us common people until a revolution releases us from this slavery, until the rich are made to share labor and responsibility with us workingmen."

The rest of the group assented gutturally. A few gesticulated protestingly. Then the communists adjourned to their headquarters, bewailing their hard luck in America.

A half-hour later, in the Wall Street district, I sat at the desk of a little man who may be properly described as a general of industry. He had once been a captain, but ability and opportunity had promoted him. The little man was cheerful but a trifle harried. He was making a get-away to his Southern game-preserve, where he proposed to shoot wild ducks, with the help of a half-dozen associates.

Within five minutes the little man answered four telephone-calls and made a quick decision on an important business matter. Between calls he dictated to two private secretaries. On a memorandum pad before him were twenty-three items requiring immediate attention. As he scratched off one item, he added another. In another room, another secretary was making certain over another telephone that the general could have oysters and omelette on the outgoing train.

"Twenty minutes, sir, to reach the railroad station," one of the secretaries murmured softly.

The little man scanned a letter in reference to an approaching banquet, glanced at the program of a symphony concert, thrust some sheets of paper at one secretary, rushed into one of his vice-presidents' offices, rushed out, pursued by a uniformed office-boy who was carrying the little man's overcoat, threw a last batch of orders at two of his secretaries and leaped into the elevator with a third secretary.

Thus he departed on his pleasure trip, shouting a farewell to me as he descended. The general of industry had kept that gait up for ten hours a day for forty of his sixty years. He would keep it up during his week's outing, because, when he wasn't shooting ducks or entertaining his associates, he would be talking to his New York office over a long-distance telephone.

By this sketchy description of a half-hour in the life of one rich man, I would not have you get the idea that he is unhappy. His life is merely typical of almost any American who, having made his million, has added to that nest-egg until he is bracketed with 496 persons who paid Federal tax on more than a million dollars income in 1928. Last year his income was again above the million mark.

When King Crœsus of ancient Lydia began to coin money in huge amounts, thus starting a style now so common, a humble subject shook his head and murmured pessimistically: "Money is the root of all evil." After which the pessimist panhandled a passing pedestrian. That wise-crack by a mendicant of the sixth pre-Christian century has been translated into every language. Though it is a fallacy, it is still repeated, while wise men of succeeding centuries have tried to put the proper twist on it.

At the dawn of the Christian era the Roman Stoic Seneca observed: "A great fortune is a great slavery." He had seen Roman rich men suffer. Saint Augustine, who dealt in actualities, declared: "The rich are like beasts of burden, carrying treasure all day, and at the night of death unladen." He found poverty preferable to riches.

Sir William Temple, the English statesman, thus commented on Seventeenth Century Midases: "Leisure and solitude are the best effect of riches, because mother of thought. Both are avoided by most rich men, who seek company and business, which are signs of being weary of themselves."

Coming close to the problems of this century, John Ruskin wrote: "It is impossible to conclude, by any given mass of wealth, whether it signifies good or evil to the nation in the midst of which it exists."

Our modern men of many millions may or may not have studied

SLAVERY *in* AMERICA

by Earl Chapin May

Ruskin, but as a rule they try to do good with vast sums inherited or accumulated.

During a fairly varied life I have been close to a bevy of millionaires, have been employed by some of them and have mingled socially with others. Many of these men of wealth have given me their confidence. The private lives of others have been unfolded to me by observation or by the disclosures of their friends and secretaries. The great majority on this list have started to acquire a single million. Having attained this ambition, they have not been content to sit down and take life easily. They have either gone broke in striving for more millions, or have joined the ranks of multi-millionaires. For being a millionaire in this age of so much money is no longer a distinction among our citizens. Only those who have an annual *income* of a million are popularly referred to as millionaires.

But being a Twentieth Century millionaire is a long way from having a sinecure.

Because he wanted to show me some of his rare paintings, one of these gentlemen, at whom the communist raved, invited me to his Westchester County mansion, which covered an expensive acre in the midst of three hundred expensively parked and landscaped acres. There were forty rooms in that mansion, a bath which cost thirty thousand dollars, and scores of servants, apparently. After an hour I gave up counting them.

Along in the evening I remarked: "If I owned a place like this, I wouldn't get up until eleven o'clock in the morning."

He smiled rather pityingly and replied: "If I didn't get up at seven each morning, and start hustling, I wouldn't have a place like this."

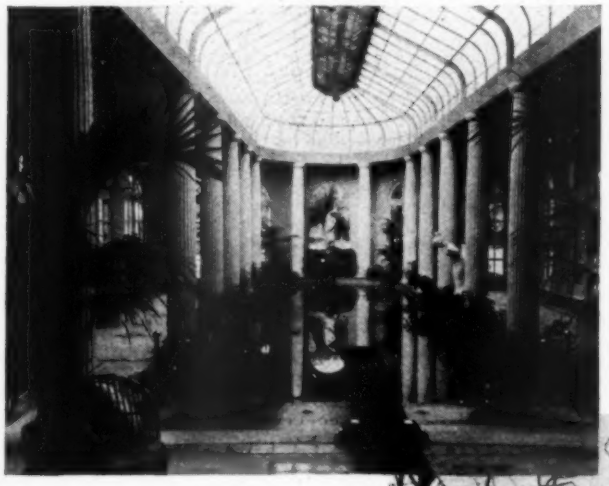
In a way that epitomizes the life of most individuals possessed of many millions. The forty thousand millionaires at which the Union Square communists protested so volubly have, according to actuarial estimates of the United States Treasury Department, an income of fifty thousand dollars, or more, annually. To a person who seeks a livelihood by writing, such an income means ease and affluence, until he gets a close-up of the picture. Then he learns that having an income of fifty thousand dollars, or better, increases life's demands amazingly, especially if that life is lived in America.

In the halcyon days before the war, men or women might inherit wealth in England or on the Continent, and live just as their ancestors lived, without additional fuss or feathers. They had little trouble "keeping up with Lizzie," because the social pace was set for them, and they were not particularly interested in business or what is commonly known as industry.

The war wiped out most great European fortunes. Those who acquired post-war trans-Atlantic wealth have found themselves in the same struggle for supremacy which has long marked the American multi-millionaire. Like most of our super-wealthy fellow-citizens, they must make more money to play the game, because as fast as they make money, those who have less try to take it away from them; while on the other hand, social and other demands on a multi-millionaire pile up so fast he is driven to make more money to meet competition.

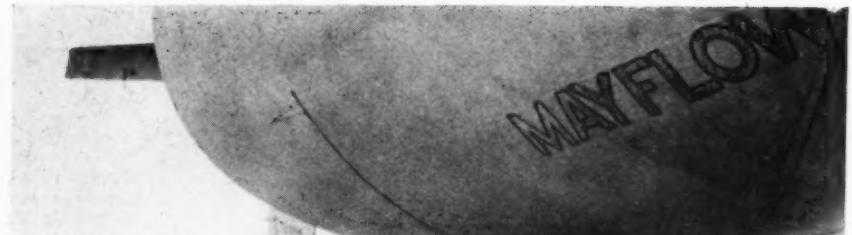
The first millionaire who put me on his pay-roll started in life by making a special food for livestock on the kitchen stove of his very modest Midwestern home. His wife was his first and most able assistant. After this ambitious couple had made up a batch of stock-food, the husband peddled it to farmers from a wagon. In a few years he purchased an exposition building for his factory, and his salesmen called on the trade over half the continent.

My friend and employer, having made a million in that fashion, built a palatial town house but spent his summers in a country mansion adjoining a privately owned race-course and the world's finest stable of trotting horses. A natural money-maker, he acquired his honest fortune at a time when President



Swimming pool at Howard Coffin's estate in Georgia; at right, the residence of Dwight Morrow at Englewood, N. J.

All photographs in this article by Wide World



Col. Edward Green inspects his private dirigible, the Mayflower.

Theodore Roosevelt was inveighing against "malefactors of great wealth" and "the predatory rich."

My friend's family life was idyllic, for next to his family, he loved light harness horses. He should have been satisfied with his good fortune, but he yearned for other worlds to conquer. When he died, at forty-six, he had sunk most of his million in a suburban trolley system. Money-making was a game with him, but it wore him out when he should have been resting.

To my mind most great fortunes are founded on restlessness. That restlessness drives a business man to success or failure. Having made his stake, he has no option but to keep in the game until it beats him physically if not financially.

There was the case of a man whom I shall call Marshall, trouble-shooter for a dominant Wall Street banking house. Whenever that banking house had to take a business over, because it had loaned not wisely but too well, Mr. Marshall was sent out to restore the sick business to health and vigor. He did this stunt repeatedly. At sixty it was his boast that he didn't need anything but work to make him happy. Each time he saved a business from the burning, he added to his own millions. He died suddenly and left a lot of money.

Carefully considering the bevy of multi-millionaires with whom I am or have been familiar, I find them falling into two classes. The first class keeps on making money because it has formed the habit, and hasn't enough imagination or initiative to broaden its field of activity. The second class continues to pile up enormous fortunes but dips into art museums, endowments, charities, sports and various "causes" or semi-public movements. In only a few cases with which I am acquainted are these extra-territorial activities due to individual egotism. They are generally due to a desire to keep from being bored to death, to justify one man's existence or to cater to some sentiment.

With a few exceptions, those who have piled up huge fortunes eventually fail to find a kick in money-making. They do buck up a bit at the prospect of putting over a big deal, and incidentally hanging something on their financial rivals—as when four such men of my acquaintance gathered at a Fifth Avenue club and gleefully agreed upon a market *coup* which added a million dollars to each one's jackpot and took four millions from other moneyed gentlemen. None of the quartet needed the money, but each got the laugh on some other fellows. All they could think of was playing with money. Yet men of that type are in the minority.

It is no longer good form to rise on wreckage. Few modern great fortunes are founded on financial piracy or the ruin of the other fellow. It behooves multi-millionaires to stick together, in America anyway. Now that the World War has made our nation the greatest money power—so long as, with seven per cent of the world's population, we buy forty-eight per cent of the world's supply of coffee, fifty-three per cent of the tin, fifty-six per cent of the crude rubber, twenty-one per cent of the sugar, thirty-six per cent of the coal and forty-two per cent of the pig iron—it behooves the men who control our commercial destiny to work together in harmony.

Hence, many of the financial-industrial generals, having gone into a huddle successfully, side-line into the arts and sciences or spend a few millions on amusements. One man who is properly credited with giving the United States a commanding position in the petroleum field donates shiny dimes to his golf caddies and to newspaper reporters, but devotes hundreds of millions to scientific research and the elimination of contagious diseases.

Long years after he had retired, at fifty-six, he gave voice to this philosophy: "It is by no means for money alone that active-minded men labor. They are engaged in a fascinating occupation. Zest is maintained by something better than mere accumulation. Hence we are a nation of spenders, and not hoarders. The success of one man spurs the others on." His own success is phenomenal; yet his two great pleasures are landscape gardening and donating money systematically. In his youth he kept books for twenty-five dollars a month and still believes that the laborer is worthy of his hire. Each day he faces two engrossing problems, how intelligently to safeguard his investments, and how to get rid of his accumulations so fellow-beings may be benefited.

Another man who has spanned our continent and crossed two oceans with message-carrying wires and cables, backs symphony orchestras cheerfully, though he stands to lose a million annually in the venture. Incidentally he belongs to fifty associations and social clubs.

One of my old bosses in Chicago controls the destiny of the world's largest wholesale drygoods house, but devotes much of his time and energy to civic improvements and to sponsoring a mer-

Hunt clubs are cropping up everywhere.

chandise mart with more floor space than any other building in history. He gets less kick out of posing as president of the wholesale house, for which he began working as an office boy, than in having his photograph taken turning the first spadeful of earth for his record-breaking building, even though he grips the spade-handle in such a way that he couldn't possibly dig up dirt with it. Here is a modern playboy of the Western World who is doing something useful and getting fun out of it.

Another of my old Chicago bosses loves his business almost exclusively. He is a candy manufacturer. When I worked for him twelve years ago, he personally superintended the making of three million dollars' worth of candy annually. Now that his enormous West Side plant produces more than ten million dollars' worth of candy every year, he gets to the plant at seven each morning, spends each Sunday cleaning machinery, and carries his secret formulas in his head, just as he did when I worked for him.

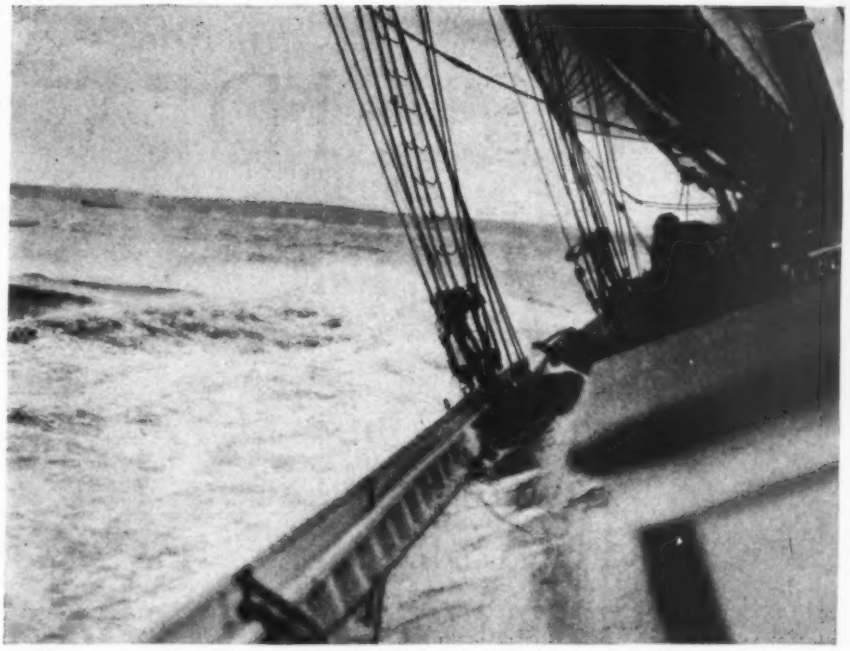
Candy-making is his obsession, and the factory is a monument to his father, who started with a single kettle in a basement, and whose bearded cheek my big boss used to kiss most tenderly. Sentiment in that case was mixed with business—is still so mixed because the business is dedicated to the family. That boss is rated in the millions, but if he quit the candy game he would have time heavy on his hands.

That is true of most moneyed men. So intricately woven are life and work that it would be difficult to tell where life begins or work ends.

Even those men who devote their so-called leisure hours to yachting, traveling, hunting, or fishing, never get far from the telephone, the wireless, the ticker-tape. There is a wireless on almost every millionaire's yacht, a telephone on his private car, a ticker-tape in his hunting lodge, and on Atlantic liners too.

Once in a blue moon a multi-millionaire escapes periodically from money-making into simple amusement. Such a one is a Philadelphia capitalist who was long the ranking partner in our most powerful banking house. While still a clerk in Philadelphia, he learned to beat an army drum. He never got over the drum-beating habit.

At seventy this capitalist delights to illustrate "rolls" and "ruffs" before school-children of his city, to manipulate the snare-drum at club dances, and do drum solos at New Year's parties of his Stock Exchange. He also delights in costume parties, at home or during the Florida winter season. He makes up well for the late Napoleon. Yet he remains an astute business man.



Yachts, the acme in money-spending. The Bluenose taking the weather.

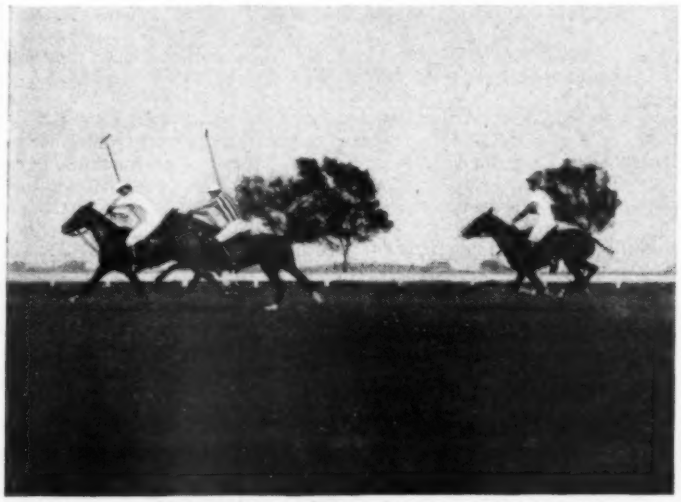
During one conference in his office, reached by private elevator from the banking floor, he sat across his desk from me and opened his card-case for my examination. The card he pointed to with greatest pride was an annual pass to our greatest circus! That man is worth, at easy estimate, one hundred millions. He has engineered some of the greatest railroad deals in history. He is one of the three Pennsylvanians who paid a Federal tax on more than five million dollars' income two years ago. And he is one of the few rich men in America who take time off for play.

The man who gave that outstanding capitalist the pass to the circus is himself worth sixty million dollars, owns three railroads and some rich oil-producing properties. He also owns ten major circuses. His hobby is his two hundred-and-fifty-thousand-dollar winter home and art museum. Like the paintings, most of the house and museum were imported direct from Italy. At fifty-five he should retire. He has more money than he can use. I have known him since, as one of seven small-town Wisconsin brothers, he brought his little circus to my native village on wagons, with two clowns and two elephants.

Last year this greatest showman in the world bought six other circuses for two million dollars cash, across a New York luncheon-table. Today he is moving eight million dollars' worth of circus property across the country "rain or shine" from northern Canada to Mexico, and from Portland, Maine, to Portland, Oregon—a stupendous feat of merchandising. He cannot quit the circus, doesn't know how to retire from it or from the game of making money.

He made his money from a standing start—a striking example of the self-assertive individual. But I sometimes wonder which type of multi-millionaire faces the greatest problem when he reaches maturity, the one who builds on his own ability, or the one who inherits wealth, plus position. My sympathy is with the latter. He is often handicapped by ease and opportunity to spend before he has acquired money.

For example, there are two sons of a great "empire builder." Their father created enormous railroad systems in an era when trust-busting was our national outdoor sport and the President *(Please turn to page 137)*



Greentree Polo Team in a game against the Army.

His Side of It

A novel of marriage in which the man wants his wife to make his home his castle where he can be king— though the wife has no such royal ideas of her mate

The Story So Far:

ALWAYS Fanny was seeking the reality behind the romance. The evening when she promised to marry Jerome she tried to explain herself—it was at a dinner given by Jerome's grandfather Lucas.

"I mean," Fanny told the old man, "that women have changed—that they can take truth standing. They no longer need men to wave plumes and swords and fight for imaginary favors—or real ones. They don't want that."

"In a long life," replied Mr. Lucas, "it has been my observation that men change not at all, and women"—he looked at her and modified it to a compliment—"very little."

Always Fanny was like that: When it came to choosing a house, she repudiated the nice conventional new suburban dwellings affected by most girls of her circle and chose instead to rent half of a queer huge old mansion in town; and her wedding, too, was shorn of the conventional embroideries so dear to tradition.

They were happy enough that first year, however. And when Fanny told him they were to have a child—

"Dear Fanny—dear little mother," he murmured, his lips against that fair brow.

But Fanny shook him off.

"Don't try to make a chromo picture of it, Jerry. I'm not the dear little mother type. I'm a tall girl, and I haven't shrunk. I'm glad about the baby, but I simply can't take up knitting soft things and hiding them away."

Curiously enough, it was just after the birth of their son that the break came. Fanny was still at the hospital, apparently very indifferent to Jerry these days, and impatient of his sentimental attitude. Work was slack at the office, and Jerry, with a good deal of time on his hands, fell to spending some of it with Stella Pratt, a stenographer he had known. Presently, of course, gossip reached Fanny.

"Tell me this," she said to Jerome. "Why do you need the two of us? What do you find in her? What do you get from her?"

"Perhaps," said Jerry, "I get a little comfort—which is certainly more than I get from you!" *(The story continues in detail:)*

NEITHER of them wanted to go on. They both knew that it must be done, but there came one of those pauses which sometimes lie on the very edge of crisis. A man and a woman who have gone from love to distrust or fear, and who know that there is nothing to do but see the thing through, can have queer lapses of regret in the very middle of their anger.

Fanny had not stirred from her place. She was still motionless in the same chair. In that moment, against the shabby, sodden memories of his last few hours, she seemed to Jerome to be so much stronger, so much more forthright than himself, that he felt as if she had stolen these qualities from him.

"So it was comfort you wanted from a wife," she said at length, and her words touched the quoted one distastefully, *"comfort!"*

"There you go! Picking me up on every word that comes out of my mouth. However, let it go as *comfort.* What's wrong if a man does want a little of it? Anyway, whatever it was I wanted, what do I get? A lot of loose talk. I tell you, Fanny, what's sauce for the goose can be sauce for the gander too. It's you, you know, who started all the fol-de-rol about not being possessive. You can put on a lot of drama now about,"—he hesi-

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"Jerry has turned buccaneer," said Mr. Lucas. "He lives with road-gangs of Italians."

by Margaret Culkin Banning

Illustrated by C.D. Mitchell

tated,—"about my stepping out a little; but what have I put up with, from the very day we were married? Hugh Bartlett's flowers even went with us on our wedding trip! You've always had men hanging around you, even in the hospital when you were having my child. You're the one who wanted to talk about freedom and all that. You've done pretty well what suited your fancy, Fanny. I've been kept around as kind of an old circus horse. Good for a few tricks. That's all. I'm not smart enough for you. But I never claimed to be."

"You know," she answered, "that I never would have lied to you."

He had a curious impulse to tell her that it was one thing for her and another for him. He couldn't have told her the truth about this wretched business of his. That sort of thing had to be kept out of the path of decent women, of the women whom men held in honor as wives. That was the code. It had always tolerated certain deceptions, upheld them.

But he knew that, of all the things he must not say to Fanny, he was considering the most impossible one.

"Of course," he said, "it depends on what you think is good faith."

"There's truth," answered Fanny, "and lies."

"Is there any use in stringing this out?"

"None," she agreed, and suddenly stretching out her arm, turned on the lights in a near-by lamp, as if she wanted to see things more clearly or convince herself of composure. "I loathe these common marriage scenes. They are so uselessly composed of what she said to him and he said to her. However, of course it wont be possible for us to go on together. I can manage perfectly well by myself."

"You're welcome to everything I have."

"Thanks. But I sha'n't need it. I'm healthy and can quite well earn my own living. You're no use to me, Jerry."

"Well, you're not so much to me!"

It was a cruel pleasure to give her as good as he got. Still, he knew that her face shouldn't look like that. No man should see a woman's face look so and not offer help or comfort. It didn't look young. It was Fanny, but she looked so hard, so devoid of gayety—as if something had been stripped away. Yet he did not dare move in her direction.

"I don't suppose you want me to stay here tonight," he went on.

"Oh, let's get on without melodrama," she answered. "I see no reason why you shouldn't. I suppose I ought to go running down the street with a suitcase, and the baby in a blanket, but I sha'n't. You've got your own room, and I have mine. After all, we've been under the same roof for some time while these same conditions existed."

"No," said Jerry sharply, "we haven't."

She looked a question but avoided the answer by speaking quickly.

"Would you mind going on up now?" she asked. "I'm sorry that I've been so unsatisfactory, Jerry. It wasn't my intention."

It came over him that she had been the only great and beautiful experience of his life, and that he must at least tell her that. But she went on before he could:

"In your own favorite phrase, I suppose I wasn't easy to live with. You wont give me a recommendation, will you, Jerry?"

There was no use talking against mockery. He went down to

"We don't have the same ideas about marriage."

look at the furnace fire, shut it off for the night as usual, and returned, going straight to his own bedroom. Fanny's door stood open, and he closed it very quietly. It seemed ridiculous to have everything so perfectly in place, to find inanimate things so orderly when people were not. Fanny was a good housekeeper. She did things easily, without strain. She wasn't apt to talk about it, but in her house things were nearly always where they were wanted or needed. He thought of that as he hung his coat in the wardrobe, and realized that all this was going to be changed.

As he got into bed, he remembered what had been overlaid, the ultimatum about the Beamsley amalgamation. Troubles all came at once. He tried to remember the exact phrasing of the proverb and couldn't. Well, Fanny was probably well rid of him. She'd get fixed, all right. Of course she was competent. He wished she weren't so much so. A man didn't get much out of all this scramble of living. No wonder a lot of them went on the rocks. It was a toss-up. Two weeks' difference in the date of the armistice, and he himself might have been only an inscription on a war memorial. He damned the memories of joys and hopes that hounted him.

He was listening all the time for Fanny's step on the stairs. Of course it was ridiculous to imagine that she would come into his room. Yet if she'd only turn the handle of the door, he'd do the rest. He could explain himself even yet, tell her with honesty that this lapse had been only a pleasureless accident, tell her how tired and worried and discouraged he'd been all these past weeks. Men did get forgiveness from women. Lots of men he knew had been in jams like this, and things had cleared up, and they had gone on living with their wives afterward. But their wives were not Fanny. That was where he got off, his thoughts told him frankly.

If he went to sleep, he'd have to wake up to this tangle. There were some things he'd have to get in order at the office. Tom Beamsley would be poking his nose in pretty soon. Jerry thought with a kind of yearning that he'd like to get away from everything, go up to that place on Bear Lake, where it would be clean and silent and deep in snow. He recalled that Fanny hadn't liked it when he went in on the purchase of that place. That had been one more time he'd done the wrong thing. She had her fur coat this year, but it wasn't paid for yet. Nothing he put his hand to came out right. Luck—his luck, at any rate—was always going the other way.

He did not hear Fanny come up at all. For he was very tired, and having had several drinks in the course of the evening, he fell asleep. . . . .

In the morning Jerome did not see his wife. The household was moving along as if its mechanism were not in the least dependent on emotions. Fanny was in the nursery when he left, and he ate his breakfast because he saw that the table was laid for him as usual. The maid had learned to broil his bacon exactly as he liked it, very thin and very crisp, and the toast was yellow-brown. Under all the circumstances, Jerry had a feeling that it would look better to eat less; but he was hungry, and the food was there. He did not take the car when he went down to the city. That was left for Fanny. He made none of the usual informal arrangements with her for sharing its use; nor did he attempt to see the baby.

At the office things were as usual. The pick-up of drama seemed to be slow. A telegram lay on top of his mail, and he read it first, with an immediate frown. Evidently the Beamsley outfit wasted no time. Tom Beamsley was going to be in town today. Calling in the chief clerk, Jerry laid the situation before him.

"I suppose," said the clerk, "that there'll be no radical change in the organization, Mr. Lucas?"

Jerry knew that the question was more cool than the thought behind it. It was his own salary which the clerk was thinking of. No doubt he needed every cent he could get.

"No change for the present, I've been given to understand," he said, and could see the glimmer of relief.

"What do you do with yourself in this slack season, Joe?" he asked.

"Oh, I keep pretty busy. There are always odds and ends. And I teach two evenings a week on the side."

"Teach?" asked Jerry. "What are you teaching about?"

The clerk grinned cheerfully.

"I give a little course for the University Extension in the evenings. 'Methods of Bookkeeping.' It doesn't amount to much, but there are quite a few people who want to take it. I was asked to do it. I know the man who promotes the extension work."

"What's there in it for you?"

"Ten dollars an evening. And it keeps a man busy."

"Yes," agreed Jerome absently, "I suppose."

Everybody seemed to be playing a better game than he was, he thought. His own was pretty slovenly.

Beamsley came in at about two o'clock. He had not that air of *camaraderie* which Jerry had seen at the Racquet Club. His business manners were nervous and almost curt, as if he feared that undue friendliness might get his pocket picked.

"Hello, Lucas. We've met before, haven't we?"

Jerry recalled the occasion cordially, but Beamsley was not there to talk of card-games. He was a man of forty-two or -three, with a pallid face and a long, veined nose. It was not a face that could ever have been handsome, but a less shrewd look in the eyes might have improved it.

"Of course," he said, getting down to business, after a few brief preliminaries, "we are glad to take over this concern and see what can be done with it. My father always knew Mr. Austin well. I understand the business hasn't been holding its own lately, but under the circumstances perhaps that was natural."

"It needs a little expansion. We do the best we can with

methods which were good enough ten or even five years ago, but they're superseded now. To compete properly we need to go about it this way," observed Jerry.

He was clear and definite. It was all laid out in his head. He'd thought it through many times.

"Yes. But of course," said Beamsley, when Jerome had finished, "that would take money. And times are hard. Money's tight."

"Rich man's talk," thought Jerry. And he answered briefly: "It's the best way to make it go."

"I'm afraid," said Beamsley, "that we'd hardly feel justified in going into it like that. As a matter of fact, the first thing I'd like to see done is to cut down the overhead up here a bit. That's what eats up money. There's the question of salaries, for example."

Jerry waited.

"Now, some of these people in the office must just be carried along in the slack season, with very little work for them to do."

"Still, they've got to live," said Jerry, "and you can't get good men or keep them except by tiding them over the dull months. They make it up in the busy ones. My men and girls here in the office have worked until twelve o'clock at night during a rush, and never been paid a cent extra for it."

Beamsley was working along a plan of his own. That became increasingly clear. Jerry's remarks were making no impression.

"Our idea was," he explained, "that a certain amount of the clerical work could be handled in our head offices. It will save duplication, and we may as well concentrate some expenses. That, you see, would give us the opportunity to carry on more economically up here."

"You mean you intend to cut down the office force here?"

"Only to a point where it's really useful."

"That reduces the importance of the office to some extent. I suppose you're also intending to change the name of the firm."

"Well," said Beamsley, "for practical purposes it will be so much better to make it a subsidiary of our own concern, wont it? We've always got our best results from concentration."

They'd been over the ground well, thought Jerry. They'd got their plans all made. It was to be a branch office itself instead of a central one with branches of its own. So much for those hopes! Well, he could see what would happen to him next, working for this grim bird.

"Of course," said Beamsley, "we want to take care of you, Lucas. That's understood. We want you to stay on. The question of salary I haven't gone into, but I should imagine that we'll be able to take care of it on the same basis—or nearly that."

"Thanks," answered Jerry. "I appreciate it. But unfortunately, I sha'n't be available. I'm severing my connection here."

Beamsley stared at him out of cold eyes.

"I hadn't heard anything about that. That wasn't what Middleton gave me to understand."

"I haven't discussed it with Mr. Middleton. But of course the only conditions under which I could continue with this firm would be if there was really a chance to carry on certain plans of development. The arrangement you suggest doesn't particularly interest me."

"I see. You've some other connection in mind, then?"

That was putting it up to Jerry. It made him squirm a little, bluff it through.

"I'm considering several things."

He was perfectly aware that Beamsley didn't believe him. It was the usual indefinite line of a man who didn't know quite where to turn.

"I'm very sorry to hear this," said Beamsley, "but I'm sure you get our point of view, Lucas. We're carrying a business that threatens to be topheavy with overhead now. We've got connections enough, and the best thing for us to do is to try to make such amalgamations as this an asset and not a liability."

They knew what they were about. Jerry knew that the Beamsley company could do things its own way. It could afford to be penny-wise. It was one thing when he was planning expansion for Mr. Austin's small, reputable grain-house, and another when he was looking at the same plans as they applied to one of the subsidiaries of a big concern.

"Yes, I see how you look at it, Beamsley."

There was just a touch of loss of friendliness in both of their voices now.

"You're quite decided on leaving us, Lucas?"

The word "us" stung Jerry. It threw him out.

"Oh, yes," he said. "It's been

(Please turn to page 112)

"I'll tell you what happened to me—I've never told anyone else, Fanny."

IN TUNE WITH

Photo by De Barron Studios

THE STONE SISTERS

Dorothy and Paula represent the younger generation of the Stone Age in the musical production "Ripples," Mr. and Mrs. Stone representing the slightly older generation. "Ripples'" first night was a grand one for the troupers, particularly for Paula Stone and her dad. Paula had crammed two years' high-school work into one to make her début in the song-and-dance business, and her dad made his miraculous come-back, with bones all mended—daring, nimble and spirited as ever, for all his fifty-six years and his swan-song as an aviator. There is just one more Stone to be heard from—Carola, sixteen, a little understudy lurking wistfully in the wings.

ROSE WILDER LANE

A much-traveled person is Miss Lane, author of "Village Maiden." As a Red Cross worker she has seen France, England, Germany, Poland, Czecho-Slovakia, Austria, Hungary, Italy, the Balkans, Egypt, Anatolia, Palestine, Syria, Mesopotamia, Persia and Transcaucasian Russia—and she's chosen Albania for her permanent home! (It seems one finds there shepherds on the hillside fluting melody to the stars, muezzins from the minarets calling, "God is God," sunsets on the purple peaks of the Balkans.) Her settling-down record is seventeen months in San Francisco—lured by newspaper work that acquainted her with police courts, politicians, revolutionists, social-service workers, ministers, farmers, clerks and such.

DOROTHY WALWORTH CARMAN

whose novel, a realistic, vivid presentation of life in Suburbia, starts on Page 36. Mrs. Carman has lived in a small New Jersey residential city since she was fourteen, and knows intimately the lives of the people on the right and the wrong side of the railroad track. When she was four, she delivered her prepared sermon on Sunday to her doll congregation of twenty-two sawdust souls; and when she outgrew them, she inscribed mournful poetry. Friends knew her as "the minister's little daughter who wants to write," and were gloomy about her career when she married. But the creative impulse that plunges to artistic achievement so frequently in those who have a religious heritage took hold of her after her baby was born, and she has since published five novels. Her picture appears at the right.

Photo by G. Maillard Kesslere

OUR TIMES

JAMES E. BAUM

is a mild-mannered gentleman given to adventuring in lands where footwork is hazardous and the lions roar at the sheer monotony of their diet. It is Mr. Baum's pleasure to penetrate their haunts, while denying them a change of calories. He tells some of his experiences in this issue. . . . . Mr. Baum served as a naval aviator in the North Sea patrol during the war; afterward he ranched in Wyoming. His first major peace-time exploit was into Abyssinia for the Field Museum. His publishers called his book on that expedition, "Savage Abyssinia"—an embarrassing choice of words for the author, when he faced the duty of sending a copy to his friend the Emperor of Abyssinia!

COURTNEY RYLEY COOPER

When the repertory company left town, Cooper left high school—an actor! As fast as he was fired, he'd get another job: buck-and-wing dancer, bill-poster, actor, car-painter. His distracted mother traced him to a circus, and the name of Cooper was lifted from the mire—to rise and shine again on the Kansas City *Star*. Buffalo Bill made him his press representative. For five years he was with the menagerie; he's been in cages with every animal in captivity except the black jaguar. His circus stories appear regularly in REDBOOK.

Photo by De Marron Studios

Photo by Vandamm

MEI LAN-FANG

is now on his first American tour. "Foremost of the Pear Orchard," is his title—first actor of China; a title handed down from the Tang Dynasty. Mei Lan-Fang's art is baffling, and yet so fascinating in its beauty and dignity that the Occidental bows humbly to an art so ancient and so perfect—one of the plays was written twenty-one centuries ago! He is actor, singer and dancer in one, indissoluble in the Chinese theater. The Japanese give him fifty thousand dollars for a month's tour, and in China his thirty-odd years have been so illustrious that he travels like a ruler, in armored cars.

Samson's voice re-arose: "De enemies of de lodge is done licked!"

Detecting!

In which Columbus Collins, detective, finds himself most unreasonably expected to guarantee the guilt of the accused

by Arthur K. Akers

Illustrated by Everett Lowry

COLUMBUS COLLINS, Demopolis' colored private detective, shuffled hurriedly and worriedly through an alley by night. Both the hour and Columbus were late. Hence the alley and the haste—and the worry.

The last was intensified by the fact that he had been calling upon a lady whose large absent husband was inclined to make mountains out of molehills. Two graves in Demopolis were generally attributed to his inability to see calls like Columbus' in the right light. And while the recent conversation had been chastely confined to lodge matters, Columbus felt justified in looking over his shoulder three or four times to the block.

Another complication was three dollars which Columbus had owed this same "Big Toby" Jones for six weeks longer than Mr. Jones had expressed himself as willing to extend credit.

The lodge snarl had to do with Big Toby too. He and Samson G. Bates, the Worthymost Master, were not seeing eye to eye in respect to changes Samson, who represented a Northern tailoring firm on the side, was proposing in the lodge's uniforms. In consequence Mr. Jones was stubbornly twisting a famous phrase to read "Grand Lodge shall not meet next week!"

How to block Samson's scheme by preventing the meeting was reported to Columbus as the burning question rendering Mr. Jones more irritable than a bear with bunions. In deference to all which Mr. Collins now stuck to speed and the dark side of the alley.

But fifty feet farther up it he received a startling answer to a question that had been bothering him all during his call. It came about through the cautious opening of a window in the rear of Willie Freeman's pressing club and pool-parlor, followed by the emergence of a bulky figure into the alley and into the night.

One eyeful of the dimensions and contours of the emerging one ended Columbus' question as to the whereabouts of Big Toby. But as he shot behind a garbage can, three bigger ones took its place: What was Big Toby doing in Willie's place at midnight? Had he seen Columbus? And what course should a badly scared private detective follow now?

Continued health and happiness demanded that the last should be settled first. The trouble was, the combined detective school and barber college of which Mr. Collins was an alumnus had been all too clear on that point: Lesson Four was unequivocal that when a detective saw a crime being committed, he was to arrest the criminal red-handed. And it was without qualifying footnotes in fine print, covering exceptions like the present—where the detective was half the criminal's size, had been calling on his wife, and owed him three dollars.

Therefore Columbus cowered and reflected behind his can. But reflection happily proved its own reward: memory rushed to his rescue with a later, healthier rule: "When in doubt, use common sense."

So, observing in which direction Mr. Jones turned, Columbus, with a fervent prayer that Big Toby had not seen him, resolutely went the other.

Morning found Baptist Hill in its biggest turmoil since the battle of the lodge uniforms had broken out between Samson and Big Toby. Willie Freeman, an unlovely character at best, could be heard in lamentation as far as the cement works. And by breakfast time Gladstone Smith, the coal-colored *Dr. Watson* of the Hill's *Sherlock Holmes*, was excitedly paging the barber-shops and barbecue stands of Strawberry Street at a gallop for Detective Collins.

Ultimately the great man was unearthed in the back room of a speak-easy disguised as a restaurant, breakfasting at leisure upon cold turnip greens and a chicken drumstick.

"Willie Freeman itchin' to see you!" Gladstone panted importantly.

"Tell him go rub liniment on hisse'f," Mr. Collins vouchsafed free medical advice between gnawings.

" 'Taint dat kind of itch," persisted Gladstone. "Willie's business git in sich a jam he cain't set down!"

"Well, den, tell him I be round soon's I finishes eatin'," further temporized Columbus.

"Willie cain't wait dat long," Gladstone refused to be cuffed loose from so exciting a topic. "He pressin'-place done been buggle-rize'. Samson G. Bates' pants done been stole!"

Columbus slackened speed on the drumstick. Samson G. Bates' connection with any case put it in a different light. For Samson was king on Baptist Hill, a leader in lodge, religion and business circles. Anything that touched him acquired importance—from lodge-uniform controversies to missing trousers.

"Why aint Willie git de po-lice?"

"Po-lice is Willie's biggest trouble now," explained Gladstone. "He bootleggin' too much in he place fo' him to pester de white folks right."

Columbus saw himself being surrounded if he wasn't careful. Heaps of times, a detective's difficulties came from knowing too little. But here he had to watch his step on account of knowing—and owing—too much.

"Tell Willie not to move nothin' twel I gits dar an' 'xamines de footprints," he reluctantly accepted the case. "An' whut all dis I heahs 'bout Mist' Bates git up a new lodge unifawm?"

"Aint know. Heah he done git up one whut dem Selma boys gwine roll over in de dust an' go blind when dey sees hit. But Big Toby's fussin'—he aint want to spend no money fo' changin' 'em."

"You guar'ntees de guilt of de firs' amb'lance load."

"Dat boy'd buy a pencil from a blind man—and den take de pencil," Columbus covered the character of Mr. Jones. "Stand back now an' let de Big Bear walk!"

Arriving at the ravished establishment of Willie, Columbus was met and hampered by half the population of Demopolis. But a boy was more important when he had a crowd to watch his work.

"When is you notice de crime done took place?" Columbus questioned as he fished forth the empty frame of a magnifying-glass and his best professional manner.

"Soon's Samson Bates come in heah an' staht kickin' over de i'onin' boa'ds lookin' fo' he pants," returned Willie weakly. "Den he sees de alley winder open—an' from den on, dat big black boy sho wuz hahd to please!"

"Mus' been he Sunday pants," commented the detective astutely. "Is you got no clues?"

"Naw. All I knows is who done hit."

Columbus skipped a breath. Willie was going at this thing backward! Such information belonged at the far end, not at the beginning, of a case. Willie must be diverted from a dangerous subject—dangerous for Columbus, who could fathom but not forget alley events of the previous evening.

Therefore, "Keep hit dahk! Keep hit dahk!" he advised hastily. "Aint no luck in gwine off half-cocked!"

"Aint no luck round me nohow!" mourned Willie. "Ev'ything diff'ent from whut Samson say. Done got de insu'ance gummed up—"

"De insu'ance?"

"Buggle-ry insu'ance," supplemented Willie. "Samson Bates sell me de pol'cy las' week. Say is somep'n git stole' out heah, de insu'ance comp'ny pay me fo' hit."

Columbus grew puzzled—by the facts and by Willie's manner. If Willie knew who committed the crime, and was insured against it besides—"Whut you hollerin' so loud 'bout, den?" he demanded.

"Hollerin' fo' whut I aint git—dat's whut!" muttered Willie aggrievedly. "An' look like dat all I *kin* do, is holler. Samson done git me all tied up in a knot—and pour glue on de knot. Aint nothin' work

"When is you notice de crime done took place?" Columbus questioned.

"Times aint git nothin' but wuss! Ol' goat aint gone befo' you come!"

out like I 'lowed. Samson own de pants. An' Samson's de insu'ance comp'ny. So he say he aint got pay off now fo' dem pants, 'caze den he jes' be takin' money out one he pockets, as insu'ance comp'ny, an' puttin' hit in de other as de owner of de pants. So I aint git nothin'—"

Columbus' head swam in sympathy. But Willie must be lured from the ticklish subject of knowing who was the thief, if detecting were to remain profitable along the banks of the Tombigbee.

"Got to git a clue befo' you talk no mo'," he announced firmly. "Got to do dat firs', no matter how much you craves to beller 'round 'bout you know who done hit. Shet up 'bout dat! Book say so. You heah me?"

" 'Spect hit would be pow'ful fine idea, come to think of hit," mumbled Willie respectfully. "But whut I cain't figure out—"

Three minutes after Columbus had finally left a glassy-eyed Willie muttering, "If dey Samson's pants—an' *Samson* pay *hisse'f* fo' he own pants, den I—" he found himself confronted with a fresh angle of a now old difficulty. As usual the bad news was borne—and broken—by the seven-foot, dull-witted Gladstone.

"Samson G. Bates say step up to the awffice—an' not fool round none on de way!" *Dr. Watson* relayed the royal command to *Sherlock* the Second.

When the king spoke, even detectives stepped. Hence Columbus shortly, hat in hand, seated open-mouthed on the edge of a chair beside the kitchen table over which Mr. Bates transacted business in loans, lodges, insurance and what-have-you.

"Mist' Collins," stated the man of affairs heavily, "a crime is been committed against de Af'can an' 'Merican Bu'gl'ry Insu'ance Comp'ny—which is me. An' 'gainst de owner of a pa'r of britches—which is also me. An'—look heah, my pants is been stole, an' I wants to know who done hit. Is you foller me?"

"Cain't see me fo' de dust," acknowledged Columbus from well in the rear of the crime. "I smells 'em out whar others jes' sniffs about."

"Whut I craves now," continued Mr. Bates in a most businesslike tone, "is de name—jes' de name of de boy whut took dem pants. He aint know yit whut he done. But he *will*. I'll tend to him my own se'f widout botherin' de white folks round de jail-house none, neither. When I finishes wid him, some boy gwine be homesick—*at* home, *sick*, I means. Is you name him to me, I pays you three dollars' reward—in dem new small-shape' bills."

Columbus hadn't seen a dollar bill for so long that he didn't know the white folks had made any changes in them. Evidently Samson had left something incriminating in the pockets of those pants, or he wouldn't be making all this fuss. The big thing was keeping Willie's mouth shut until Columbus could cook up a clue and collect this three dollars. It was blab-mouthed boys like Willie that kept detectives hungry all the time.

Three dollars. . . . . Something clicked. Right between Columbus' ears! Why, that was just what he owed Big Toby! And a way to get it! And a lot less probability thereafter of Toby crippling him on sight trying to collect it! A dollar a word, too! Columbus would be making money faster than old telegraph company!

Everything grew rosy as a summer's dawn—until a sort of dull internal *clonk!* announced the advent of the real and further facts in Columbus' consciousness—to the effect that if he showed up in unprecedented possession of three dollars right after it was publicly known that Samson had paid a three-dollar reward to him for naming who came out of Willie's window at midnight—well, things might not turn out so well after all. Especially with Toby Columbus' creditor in the matter of three dollars, and Samson's opponent in the matter of the lodge uniforms.

So again everything was all wrong.

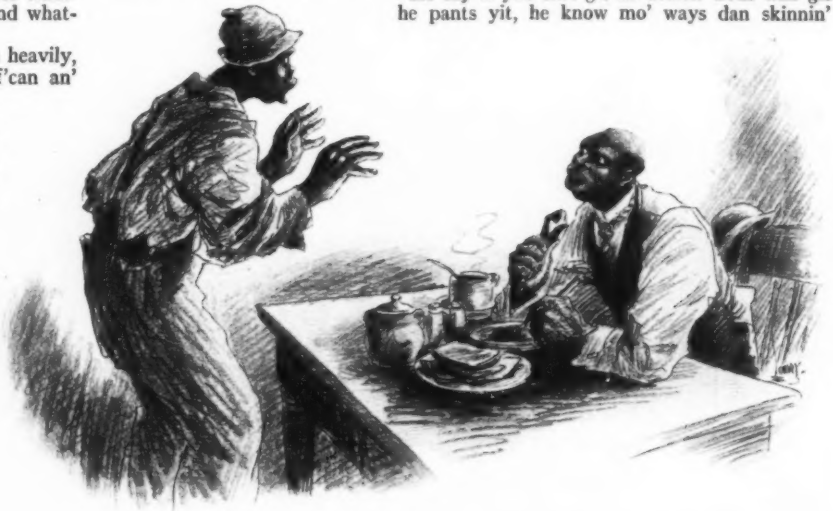
Wretchedly Mr. Collins sought surcease from this newly disturbing phase of a rapidly complicating situation with himself at its core. A further trouble about being the only colored detective in town gnawed at his consciousness: he was always getting clients on both sides of the same case.

And in this instance he had the added embarrassment of being professionally engaged to discover who had committed a crime when he already knew—and dared not tell. Every time he thought of Big Toby crawling out of Willie's window, he had a fresh cold chill. And every time he thought of what Willie could do to him with a few ill-chosen words, he saw a long row of white beds with himself in one of them.

Not to speak of the ever-recurring question: how was Columbus going to enjoy the flowers much longer, except in a hospital vase, if he didn't secure and pay to Big Toby the precise sum of three dollars?

Up one street and down another shuffled Columbus with his problems—until the reappearance of that lengthy bearer of bad news, Gladstone.

"Samson done sont fo' you some mo'," he related with gusto. "He say if you aint git no action 'bout who git he pants yit, he know mo' ways dan skinnin'



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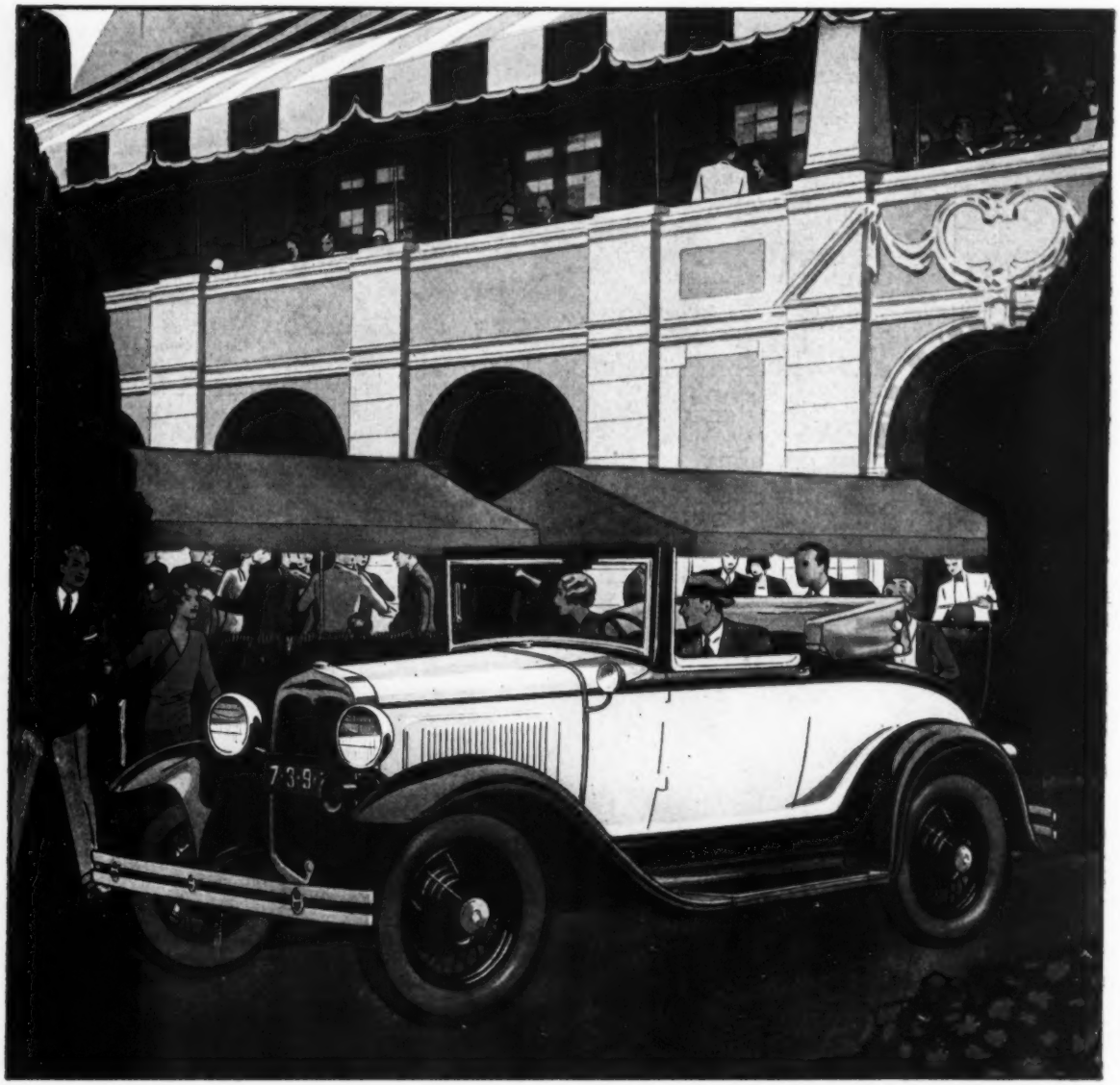

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you an' pourin' turkentine over you, to make you make haste."

"'Spectin' 'pawtant developments widin fawty-eight houahs," Columbus reported to Samson. It was a quotation from "Lesson Seven—How to Stall Your Client."

And, "Brains, whar is you?" he panted to himself at the far end of a fast ten blocks when a fleeting backward glance indicated at last that Samson was no longer in pursuit.

Columbus paused to pant. That anyone should deliberately monkey with Samson, as was Big Toby in endeavoring to block Samson's pet scheme of a change in lodge uniforms, was something that Mr. Collins was never farther from understanding. In his own case it unquestionably behooved him to walk softly and name some one quickly. But whom?

DISCONSOLATELY Mr. Collins sought out the white folks' dump-heap above the river's edge to think. Fruitless hours passed. No one came near him. Only a goat, lunching methodically about the heap's outer edges. A goat—

Again Columbus experienced the unfamiliar sensation of a rush of ideas to the head.

A goat— His professional slogan, "I smells 'em out whar others jes' sniffs about" took on new form and substance. A shot in the arm couldn't have had a more profound effect upon the original *Sherlock* himself! Columbus was alert, awake, charmed by the power of mind over matter—if the mind ever really got started!

Turning his new plan over and over in his consciousness as he scuttled up Baptist Hill toward its execution, Columbus could but readmire its beauties, its advantages. It vindicated him professionally. It met all of Samson's preliminary specifications in respect to the reward. It paid off Big Toby, and mollified him as well, by relegating to obscurity the late episode of the alley. Indeed, only one person in the world could object to it, and he didn't count anyway—not in view of the larger good attained by whatever slight sacrifice he might be called upon to make.

"Goat, sho is gwine feed you couple of fine rubber heels fo' yo' lunch!" caroled Columbus to the source of his recent inspiration. "Gwine down an' settle all dat pants business now."

Half of being the great detective he was, Mr. Collins admitted to himself en route to Samson's establishment, was in keeping your clients' mouths shut. The other half was in letting one idea suggest another—as in this case.

"How 'bout who git dem pants?" demanded Samson before he was well within the door. No wonder Samson got on Big Toby's nerves about those lodge uniforms, reflected Columbus; all the time harping on something!

But this time he was ready for Samson!

"Jes' found out who hit wuz took 'em," he claimed Mr. Bates' complete and early interest.

Samson's reaction was prompt and pleasing. In order, a drawer and Columbus' eyes opened. Above a stack of currency in the former, Mr. Bates extended a moistened thumb and finger. Columbus moistened his lips. His eyes were already stretched so wide he couldn't wink. Old scheme sure was working right!

"Name him," instructed Mr. Bates as he peeled off the first bill. "After dat *I* 'tends to him. An' in de 'tendin', I builds up de amb'lance business right smaht round heah. Who he?"

Columbus gulped. Well as things were going, here was the crucial moment. Once it was past, the die would be cast. After that he faced either consistency or consequences. And here went!

"W-w-willie," he stuttered. "Willie Freeman, he git yo' pants!"

Mr. Bates half arose from his chair, his brows contracted. "Say dat ag'in—slow," he directed.

Columbus did.

"Willie?" repeated Samson thickly. *"Willie?* Huccome? Why—why—*he* de boy whut do all de hollerin' fo' de insu'ance on 'em!"

"'Fo' de insu'ance' is right," stated Columbus with a different inflection. He was into it now! "Aint hit stand to reason? Is a boy take out fire insu'ance, an' den right away he git a big fire: Cain't heah nothin' after dat fo' de folks talkin'! An' is he take out buggle-ry insu'ance—an' right after dat dey's big *pants* robbery—huh?"

Samson followed Columbus so fast now he was way ahead of him. Suddenly here was something he could understand, including the motive! Two and two made four. Then, swept off his mental feet by Columbus' logical and circumstantial revelation of Willie's sartorial perfidy, signs of apoplexy, followed by mayhem, multiplied. Samson was plainly getting all steamed up. And it looked like the longer he looked at the matter, the madder he grew at Willie. A better piece of framing, Columbus reflected, couldn't have been done at a picture store! For his part, in a minute more he was going to have three dollars and a lot of immunity from those disasters that had been looming extra heavily ahead of him.

AS for framing Willie, the harassed Columbus had already passed the point where necessity knew no law but lying, just before he met the goat. And that worthy animal had but, by association of ideas, suggested nominating Willie as the goat in the present instance. Besides, it was half Willie's own fault if he got into trouble—hadn't he supplied a plausible motive to use against himself by taking out burglary insurance just before the crime?

Indeed, the framed case against Willie began to acquire the weight of circumstantial evidence—so much so that in ten minutes more, Columbus himself was half convinced that Willie was guilty, and wholly convinced that Columbus Collins was a great detective. Even Willie's past and then-alarming remarks about knowing who had burglarized his pressing-place revealed themselves now in their true light of a smoke-screen, a counter-fire, a dead herring dragged across the trail to divert suspicion.

"I smells 'em out whar others jes' sniffs about!" murmured Detective Collins proudly to himself as he reached for his reward with a clear conscience. Which was just before the bottom fell out.

Samson precipitated this disaster by floundering squarely into the one and only overlooked weak spot in the framing of Willie by Columbus:

"Is Willie not produce back dem pants when I gits th'ough wid him," Samson rocked Columbus' boat, "de ambulance business *still* gwine be good. Jes' Willie got to move over an' make room 'longside him in hit fo' whoever fall down on *namin' de right boy.* I aint aim to pay out no three dollars fo' no water-haul: Name me de right one, an' I'll git de pants back all right; name de wrong one—an' hit's jes' gwine be too bad!"

COLUMBUS collapsed internally. This was changing the rules after a boy had started to play the game, and too late to back out! Production of the plunder hadn't been figured in the framing of Willie Freeman! Not with that shadow of Big Toby crawling from Willie's window at midnight so indelibly and unmistakably in the picture. Worse, Willie had insisted that he knew who took them. And in establishing his innocence Willie was liable to do a little naming himself—with results that drew Columbus right back into his former dangerous relationships to Big Toby, plus the powerful peeve of the deceived Samson and the minor one of the outraged Willie.

When a boy started lying, looked like he couldn't see any finish after that—except his own!

"An' in takin' de three bucks," Samson continued sealing a bad situation for Columbus, "you tharfo' guar'ntees de guilt of de firs' amb'lance-load, which is Willie; an' de retu'n by him of de pants. Heah yo' money."

Numbly and dumbly Columbus took it. Whoever said having money made a boy feel good was a liar. Columbus had never felt worse. But he was going to! He could see now that the trouble about having a brain was that, once started, it was harder to shut off than a neighbor's midnight radio. His own intellect was keeping right on working, grinding out unpleasant facts and fancies concerning his next personal twenty-four hours.

All he had done, it kept reminding him in his misery, was to pyramid his perils—added Samson to Big Toby.

An hour later, so lessened in altitude of mind and body as to be taking a worm's-eye view of the same dump-heap, Columbus again encountered there his former ill-starred inspiration, the goat.

"Git gone from heah!" urged Mr. Collins on sight, as he pelted the unhappy animal with rocks. "Ev'y idea I gits from you is got wum-holes in hit!"

"B-a-a-a-a-a!" bleated the goat in astonished flight.

"Dat whut I says right back at you!" Columbus flung after him.

"'Bout whut?" an unwelcome questioner appeared over the edge of the dump in the form of Gladstone.

"Times aint git nothin' but wuss!" muttered Mr. Collins. "Ol' goat aint gone good befo' heah *you* come! I got trouble 'nough now."

"Willie's business sho is in a swivet over on Baptis' Hill," Gladstone issued a verbal noon extra.

"You aint seen no swivet yit," Columbus delved gloomily into his own personal future.

"Maybe I aint," admitted Gladstone. "But I seen Samson G. Bates gwine into Willie Freeman's pressin'-place wid a big scantlin' jes' now. An' aint nobody come out yit. . . . . Jes' big bumpin' an' yellin' an' cloud of dust gwine on in dar fo' de longes' now."

Columbus' knees wabbled. The worst was even now in progress, then! Nothing might have come out of Willie's place *yet,* but under the influence of the scantling, the truth would shortly emerge from Willie's mouth. And when Willie named Big Toby, then detecting was going to head the list of hazardous occupations around Demopolis.

It looked increasingly like the psychological time for a boy to go far back under a freight-house for a while.

But before Columbus' feet had had time to finish carrying out this excellent idea, it was too late. Around the final street-corner he found his way blocked by a dense crowd—a crowd agog with anticipations of a holiday of the Roman persuasion.

Well up to the front, and lending authenticity to their theory that a good time would shortly be had by all, was none other than Samson G. Bates of scantling and lodge-uniform fame. Beneath the left elbow of Mr. Bates was a bundle. And beneath his right was the neck of Mr. Willie Freeman. Attached to the neck, moreover, was Willie himself.

LESS and still less did it look to the pop-eyed Columbus like a good time for him to stick around. At fifteen miles an hour, he might do himself a lot of good before time for the next act. As he was, if he remained, he could only hope to do well until Willie saw him.

Mr. Collins squirmed and perspired indecisively—until it was too late. For he had suddenly and flabbergastedly discovered a fresh trouble with crowds—in them a boy never could tell whose vest he was liable to find in his face. He lifted his eyes now from a vast and smothering expanse of checkered fabric, to find himself gazing first trustfully—and then terrifiedly—into the grim visage of Big Toby! A ham-sized hand clutched the arm of the shivering sleuth.

"Been lookin' all over fo' you!" Toby rumbled.

Columbus knew it. That was what he had been worrying about all the time. And here was where three dollars was going to have to do a man's work in the world.

"C'm on over heah out dis rookus wid me!" further instructed Mr. Jones. "Craves to make talk wid you—"

But Columbus couldn't match the craving. He couldn't hear anything for the noise his feet were making begging for the road! Neither they nor he liked that new look in Big Toby's over-prominent eyes.

"—Now, 'bout dem three dollars you been owin' me," Big Toby became definite upon the least popular subject in all Mr. Collins' galaxy of griefs.

Feebly Columbus fumbled for them—then paused to make sure if his ears were failing him. For how else could he account for Big Toby seeming to utter unbelievable words: "Nemmind dem three dollars; I—"

A fresh surge of the crowd broke off Toby's recital right at its most fascinating place for Columbus. It surged violently, then re-formed to reveal an unsuccessful attempt on Willie's part to escape as the cause of its shifting. And now he saw Samson unrolling the mysterious bundle beneath one arm, the while he kept Willie's bullet-shaped head still firmly gripped within the curve of the other. Willie had a wild look in his near eye that to the palpitant Columbus told everything—Willie was fixing to tell the truth!

But Willie didn't—which but added to Mr. Collins' inability to identify or understand all he saw, even before a backward glance at the looming Big Toby indicated that that bulky leader of the minority in the lodge was in still worse straits than that. For quite a different reason. For, so far as Big Toby was concerned, it seemed as though some one had just got out an extra that threw new light for him on an old situation. Big Toby was adding two and two faster than an adding machine.

Admiringly the milling crowd gasped as the wrapping-paper of Samson's high-held bundle now parted further. And beholding, Columbus' intellect forthwith became farther behind on current events than a stock-ticker at noon on a three-million-share Saturday. For Mr. Bates here flung to the breeze the contents of his package, that all might see.

And if Columbus' eyes told him the truth about said contents, then black was white, the captive Willie a magician of the first water. Things were contradicting each other so fast it made a boy's head swim. The harder Columbus tried to reconcile what he knew with what he saw, the worse the knot in which his addled brain became tied.

Then another shock followed a sidelong glance upward at the now staring sweating Toby towering beside him. For if Columbus increasingly understood too little, Big Toby was in precisely the opposite position. Toby understood more than ever. In consequence of which his labored breathing, protruding eyes, and twitching fingers as he glared in Samson's direction indicated recurrence of a desire to fill a fresh-made grave—with Willie.

"Keep him off me!" howled that wall-eyed pants-presser, clinging unaccountably now to his captor. "Don't let—"

"You dawggone right I'll keep him off you!" interrupted Samson grimly "You's my meat now. An' looks, too, like somebody else jes' found out somep'n too late to do him no good!"

Then Samson's voice re-arose in public triumph, as it were, with: "De en'mies of de lodge is done licked! An', after all—" Here he waved anew what had been the contents of the mysterious bundle,—*"Grand Lodge meets tomorrer!"*

FOGGED with questions, numbed with contradictions, Columbus felt again the heavy hand of Big Toby clamp down upon his shoulder, drawing him aside. He could guess the rest.

But surprises were not over, it seemed.

For, "—As I wuz sayin'," Big Toby resumed the broken thread of his recent conversation, "you aint owe me no three dollars no mo' if you keeps yo' mouth shet—ever since I seen you seen me crawlin' out of Willie's back winder dat night in de alley—"

"Cain't git hit open no mo' widout a crowbar—after I git done axin' you somep'n," mumbled the still-dazed Columbus, laboring in the mental darkness born of contradictory and irreconcilable facts.

"Ax hit. I knows mo' dan I c'n stand 'bout dis heah business now—ever since I see whut Samson jes' now wavin' round in he hand."

"Yeah, dat whut pester me too," confessed Columbus hoarsely. "You mean dem bright red pants, aint you? Dat whut I wants know: When Willie aint steal dem pants, how c'd he manage to give 'em back to Samson Bates?"

Toby's jaw now dropped, in turn.

"Boy," he managed at length to articulate thickly, "as de world's dumbest detective, you is entitle' to de life-size picture of de Atlantic ocean!"

COLUMBUS could stand no more. "I—I aint no detective," he continued his interrupted confession. "I jes' frame up on Willie to Samson so I aint git in no mo' trouble wid you, tellin' how I seen you comin' out of Willie's winder dat night wid dem pants. 'Sides dat, I been shiverin' about ever since like ol' chick'n round de choppin'-block, waitin' fo' Willie to tell de truth an' ruin me an' you: Willie say he knew who 'twuz, too."

But again Big Toby seemed taken with a seizure of some sort.

"Me wid dem trick pants?" de demanded. "Me? An' waitin' fo' *Willie* to tell de *truth!* Why, Samson done got dat out of him long 'go! Boy, aint you know *nothin'* above yo' neck?"

"Less'n dat," mumbled Columbus as the fog thickened between his ears.

"Den listen an' l'arn: Whut made dem red britches so 'pawtant to Samson wuz dey wuz de only pa'r he got to take to Grand Lodge an' show de members how de p'posed new models gwine look. No pants, no Lodge—wuz de jam dat had him in. I aims to block him from holdin' dat pants-changin' meetin' of de lodge by swipin' dem red britches out of Willie's place when Samson send 'em dar to be pressed. So dat's huccome *I* wuz in Willie's shop dat night—after dem pants. But boy—"

And again Big Toby, gallant in his defeat by circumstances and Samson, fought for air and words.

"No wonder Willie say *he* knew who took 'em! An' in framin' Willie, you done de greatest piece of detectin' dat's been pulled since de Washin'ton Monument wuz a li'l tombstone! *Now* I's jes' beginnin' to see, too, why I couldn't find dem red pants in Willie's place dat night—*Willie's done stole 'em first!* Fo' de insu'ance, jes' like you tol' Samson all de time!"

Toby paused to note the effect of this on Columbus. And, "Git yo' jaw out yo' lap," he urged hastily at what he saw. "Whut I·means is dat in framin' whut you thunk wuz de *wrong* boy, you falls right spang on to de *right* one after all!"

"Yeah—jes' l-l-like I say all de t-time!" stuttered the recovering Columbus as the light of revelation broke over him. "I smells 'em out whar others aint do nothin' but jes' sniff about!"

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NO SUCH PERSON

(Continued from page 60)

Anne Carr hadn't liked that! Mona rose and took off the melons.

"Mona, did you know that Fay Carter finally married Ted?" Donald called after her.

"No!" She was not really so interested as she appeared. "*Do* tell me, Don!"

Gossip, light idle talk. . . . . Coffee, and little cakes. . . . .

Donald leaned back in his chair and looked at the two women. "Why don't we go to a show tonight?" he suggested. "You must be aching for the theater, Mona."

Anne Carr caught her breath, audibly.

"Why not?" agreed Mona, indifferently. It was, after all, the wisest thing to do.

There was an unreality, the surface lightness of farce, about the situation. They were not three human beings with human emotions; they had become actors in a comedy of manners. When Donald took Mona's arm to help her into the cab, she turned and looked at him humorously. "Turk!" she whispered accusingly.

But when they left the theater, it became, without warning, a farce no longer. Now they were not actors; they were three people who were hurting one another desperately.

"We'll take you home first, Mona," Don said quietly.

We! Mona nodded.

They shook hands in the cab, but Donald insisted on unlocking the door and seeing his wife safely inside.

"Good night," he said, soberly.

"Good night, Don," she whispered.

NO, there was no humor now. Mona stood uncertainly in the center of her living-room and stared about her, trying to realize reality. She looked at the long gold-framed mirror. It had belonged to Don's mother. The Hepplewhite table was hers. The Persian lamp—where had they got that, and when? Reality. . . . .

Mona flung herself upon the couch and gave way to crying. She was at home; she had seen Donald; she had seen Anne Carr. It was as though for the first time she comprehended what it all meant. There *was* such a person as Anne Carr! She could no longer pretend that there was not. She had seen her, talked with her, touched her hand. And—

"Oh, I *hate* her!" cried Mona Barrie aloud, in a choked voice. "I hate her—hate her—hate her!"

She did not attempt to sleep. Pretense was ended; now she must face facts.

And what a fool, what a stubborn, unthinking fool she had been! Ever since Donald's letter, at Fiesole, she had gone on, sustained by two such obvious untruths. She faced them now squarely. Donald Barrie was not a child; nor was Anne Carr a myth. They were two independent human beings—who loved each other!

"It never occurred to me, Mona, that you were the sort of woman who would try to hold a man against his will." Donald had said that to her!

"Am I?" thought Mona, now. "Am I that sort of woman?" And what if she were? What earthly good would it do her?

"Her name is Anne Carr, and we want to be married." That was what he had written. Could anything be more definite?

There was no choice of paths, for all her fine phrases that afternoon; there was merely a choice of the dignity or lack of dignity with which she should travel the one road. Donald wanted to marry this girl. "I like your Anne," she had told him that evening. Well, she did like Anne Carr—or would like her, if she did not suddenly hate her so. No, she could only submit gracefully.

She shook her head in bewilderment. It was all so wrong! So wrong that after these six struggling years they must give up now, just when ease and contentment should lie before them. Her mouth quivered. If only she had had her baby, before! "On twenty-five hundred a year?" she reminded herself bitterly.

"But what will *become* of me?" she heard her own voice demanding aloud, in stark terror.

Anne Carr had accused her. "I thought you said you loved him. You're thinking only of yourself!" Had the girl been right?

Love Donald—love Donald truly. She would want him to have his Anne, then. If she commenced thinking about his own good, she could not help but color her thoughts with her own selfishness. She must force herself to think only of what he wanted, and to help him in getting it.

Color rushed into Mona's cheeks as the sudden knowledge of what she must do surged into her brain.

"Oh, God!" cried Mona, at its obviousness.

She wasn't the stuff to be noble, like that! Anne Carr had been right, after all; she was selfish. There was one obvious path to follow, if she loved Donald, and she couldn't take it. Yet she knew, unquestionably, that since she had seen it, all other ways were closed. She shut her eyes. It was like death, yet she felt better, now that she knew. At least she did not have to think any more.

And, not needing to think, Mona Barrie slept.

IN the morning, when she waked, the way was quite as clear, and she found that she was glad for that. She was suddenly too tired to argue further with herself. Her trunks stood about the room unopened, and again she was glad. She felt stripped of all energy, all power of further decision. CABIN, the stickers upon them read. Well, cabin they should be again.

She didn't want to see Donald. Anne Carr would understand, and there would be less emotion that way. She was too tired, too spent, for further emotion.

The morning paper lay outside the door, and she turned to the shipping news. There was a boat at noon next day. She made herself coffee, dressed, and went out.

It was a little like a recurrent nightmare, more than a little grotesque, to find Anne Carr in her scarlet beret sitting again upon the brownstone railing, waiting for her return.

"I had to see you," Anne said. "Do you mind?"

"I wanted to see *you*," said Mona. They entered the apartment in silence. "I'm sailing for France at noon tomorrow."

Anne Carr gasped. "But—"

"Please listen to me. I'm so awfully tired." Mona sat down and contemplated the younger girl wearily. Nothing seemed really important any longer. "I don't want to see Don again. I'll get a divorce in Paris. But I'll get it on one condition; Don wont like that condition, and it's up to you to make him accept it. I wont change my mind." Her voice was almost monotonous in its evenness.

Anne Carr continued to stare at her.

"I told you that I love Don—and I do," said Mona. "That's why I don't intend to see you two go through what we did. I don't care about you—you're young. But Don's been through it once." Her eyes, holding the girl's gaze, were steady. "Anne, I'm going to turn half my father's income over to you and Don. I'll still have as much to live on as Don and I had together. I—"

Anne Carr rose protestingly, and stood before Mona, her face working excitedly. "But you can't do that!" she exclaimed.

"I can't do anything else," Mona contradicted her. "I'm being purely selfish. It's for my own peace of mind."

The younger girl suddenly dropped to the floor beside the elder and caught her hand. Her eyes had filled with tears and her mouth quivered.

"And you said you were selfish!" she cried. "I love him so, Mona—it seems as if I'd die without him. But—" She lifted her face, white and frightened. *"I don't love him like that!"* she whispered. *"I couldn't love anyone like that!"* Like a statue, she knelt, still and agonized, waiting.

Mona smiled at her calmly. "You're young, Anne. And you haven't lived with Don six years." The girl's forehead dropped upon Mona's knee, and Mona rested her hand gently on the fair head. "Stop it, Anne," she said. "It's all right. You'll marry Don—and for God's sake, child, have a baby as soon as you can."

Anne lifted her head. "I'm ashamed," she said dully. "I didn't realize. If you love him like that—it makes me want to kill myself!"

Mona Barrie sighed. "Don't be a fool. You and Don—"

"No!" Anne Carr interrupted wildly. "It's I who must go away!"

"Don't you think," asked Mona, coldly, "that you're being a little bit dramatic?"

"No!" the girl denied hotly. "Oh, how could I have ever thought— No, Mona, I'll go, and you and Don—" Her voice rose hysterically.

MONA pressed the palm of her hand flatly over Anne's mouth. "Stop it! You're being ridiculous. Have you forgotten that Don happens to love you?"

Anne Carr shook her head. "Maybe he thinks he does! Because I reminded him of you! I've always known—" She was like a young Jeanne d'Arc, fierce in her renunciation.

Mona stood up, trembling. "I can't stand any more of this," she said; and her

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GERMANY'S most beloved medical figure—Geheimrat Professor Dr. Friedrich Kraus of Berlin!

Half the great doctors of Europe, it is said, have studied under Dr. Kraus. For 20 years he headed Germany's most important clinic.

For three great health troubles—constipation and disorders of digestion and the skin—Dr. Kraus urges the remarkable cleansing *food*, fresh yeast.

"Until recently," he says, "few people realized how injurious constipation is. Drastic cathartics and habit-forming pills often were depended on. Little was done to correct its cause.

"Yeast stimulates the intestines. Regular evacuations occur. Normal digestion is restored. Skin disorders such as pimples and boils are combated."

Eat 3 cakes daily of Fleischmann's Yeast. Each cake is rich in *two* precious vitamins—B and D. At grocers', restaurants, soda fountains. Directions on label.

READ WHAT GREAT DOCTORS SAY • •

DR. LORENZO CHERUBINI, Professor of Medical Pathology at the University of Rome, declares: "Yeast is invaluable in treating disturbances of the intestines, of digestion and of the skin."

DR. PAUL GERBER, noted Austrian internal specialist, says, "The creation of the 'sunshine' vitamin D by irradiating fresh yeast should be a boon to the millions who are indoors most of the day. Vitamin D builds hard bones and teeth and helps keep them strong."

"'Yeast will help you,' my doctor said"

(*Left*) "For some time I had suffered from intestinal trouble," *writes* MISS NORMA HENDERSON *from Toronto* (at right, in photograph). "I was very weak and had no appetite. Our doctor said yeast would do me a lot of good. And it *did!* My friends remark on how well I seem."

(*Right*) "Boils all over my back! I was miserable!" *writes* CLIFTON PRINCE, *Worcester, Mass.* "Seeing a cake of yeast under a microscope convinced me. It was full of living yeast plants! I started to eat it and the result was miraculous. Since then, all my family have eaten it. A doctor advised it for my grandchild. My son eats it as a laxative and tonic."

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hand, upon the chair, shook. "You'd better go home now, Anne."

"Away from Don!" insisted the girl. "I promise, Mona!"

"Oh, my God!" cried Mona, and her voice held more of pure exasperation than any other emotion. "I'd like to spank you, you little fool! Take what the gods give you, and don't be so darned *noble!*"

Anne Carr sat on the floor beside Mona's empty chair and stared unseeingly before her, lips parted, eyes dry and wide-open. Again she was the young Jeanne, with her visions. Mona went to the telephone and called a taxi. Then—

"Go in and wash your face," she ordered, as one speaks to a child.

Anne did not move, and Mona shrugged and walked to the window. They did not speak until the doorbell rang; then, like a girl in a trance, Anne Carr rose.

"I mean it, Mona," she said, and held out her hand. "I'm going away."

MONA BARRIE began to laugh. She laughed at Anne Carr, laughed at the closed door, laughed until her laughter mounted to hysteria, and she choked.

"Good Lord," she told herself, "I'm as bad as she is!" She drew a long breath and forced herself to stop, obeyed her own command to Anne and sponged her flaming face with cold water. Tragedy and undiluted farce, interwoven!

And she had thought the interview with Anne would be emotionless! She smiled grimly at that, and paused before her desk. She was quite calm, now. She would write to Don, and then remove herself and her trunks to a hotel for the night.

She was so intent upon her composition that she did not hear the key turn in the lock.

"Mona!"

She started at Don's voice. "Good heavens, you frightened me!" she said, and then stared at him stupidly.

Without a word Donald Barrie crossed the room and kissed his wife.

"Don!" said Mona.

Deliberately he lifted her face in his hands and kissed her again. Then he sat down beside her. There were deep shadows beneath his eyes, shadows of sleeplessness.

"I'm in your hands, Mona," he said simply. "I've been a fool. I didn't write you that I was trying for the Carleton scholarship. I heard half an hour ago that I'd got it—and my first thought was to come to you."

"Oh, Don, I'm glad!" she cried. "About the scholarship, I mean."

"Only about that?" he asked her gently. He took her hands. "It's horribly tough on Anne, Mona. I've acted like a child. God knows why. But from the instant I saw you again, it was you."

Mona Barrie closed her eyes. "I can't believe any more," she whispered. "I don't know what's true."

"Don't you?" He lifted her chin so that her eyes looked into his. "Oh, Mona—"

Of course she knew!

"Have you told Anne?" she asked him.

He shook his head.

Then Mona commenced talking, eagerly, telling him all that had happened between her and the girl Anne Carr.

"But she's got to know that it's my decision, Mona," said Donald gravely. "It's my responsibility. I don't want to hurt her any more than I have to—but I want to be fair to you."

"Fair to *me!*" said Mona scornfully. "*I* don't need fairness! Let her think she's given you back to me, Don! Give her her noble gesture! She deserves it."

Donald Barrie's fingers tightened about his wife's hand, and for a moment they sat silent.

"You two make me out rather a weakling, don't you?" he asked at last.

She looked at him squarely. "Haven't you been, Don?"

He winced, but his eyes did not falter. "God forgive me, yes," he admitted.

"Well!" said Mona.

"You're—rather wonderful, you know," said Donald Barrie to his wife.

She laughed. "Wonderful, nothing! I love you, Don." Her eyes were soft. She was thinking that there was, after all, such a person as Anne Carr. And Mona Barrie knew that for all her pain, she was become twice the person she had been before.

ONE GANGSTER QUITS

(Continued from page 73)

"Wait," Morrow said to the driver as he darted into the pharmacy. Entering a phone-booth, he called a number. Presently a girl's voice answered.

"Hello, Rita," he said. "This is Hall. I've been delayed a little bit, but I'll be there before long. If anybody calls you and asks for me, say I'm not there yet, but that you expect me any minute."

"Is something wrong, Hall?" the girl's voice demanded anxiously.

"No," answered Hall. "Now, don't get worried. I'm just attending to a little business that I'd overlooked. Good-by."

He hung up the receiver for a moment and then called another number. After a brief wait he heard a coarse voice answer.

"Let me talk to Spike," said Morrow.

Another wait. Then: "Hello, Spike."

"Yes."

"Here's something you might like to know." Morrow spoke with his mouth close to the transmitter. "Black Joe Spatillo, Jim Gada, Slick Martin and Boy Renzi are all sitting in Spatillo's car parked in front of ——North Clark Street. They are waiting there to burn down a certain party. It's a dark street along there."

"Say," came the voice of the man Morrow had been addressing, "who the hell are you, and what are you telling me this for?"

"I'm the fellow those dudes are waiting for," answered Morrow. "I'm telling you because I thought you might want to send some flowers."

"I see," came the voice. "Maybe I will, at that."

Morrow left the booth and purchased an envelope and a sheet of notepaper from the clerk. He hastily scrawled a note, thrust it into the envelope and addressed it to his own apartment in a suburb. Hurrying out to the cab, he gave the driver the note and a ten-dollar bill.

"Take that letter to the address written on it," said the young flyer. "If there is no one at home, leave it under the door. Then come back here. I may need you again."

Morrow knew that there was no one at his apartment, but the errand would keep the taxi-driver busy long enough to assure his not meddling in things that were shortly to happen. When the taxi was out of sight on its northward journey, Morrow lighted a cigarette and strolled slowly down the street toward where the blue auto still stood at the curb. He saw a man emerge from the building and enter the parked car.

"Been up to Rita's apartment to see if I was there," muttered Morrow grimly. "Poor kid—I'll bet she's scared stiff."

There was still a block between Morrow and the car in which the racketeers waited, when another big closed car came rolling up the street. Its back curtain was drawn, and it bore two passengers besides the driver. As it came alongside Spatillo's car, it suddenly slowed down. The next moment two machine-guns were singing a duet of death. For half a minute they spat tongues of orange flame into the night and poured their rain of death-laden lead into the car at the curb. Then the staccato rattle stopped as suddenly as it had started.

The death-car leaped away from the scene, swung around a corner and disappeared down a side-street.

Morrow let half a dozen other persons beat him to the scene of the slaughter. Then he came hurrying up, took one look into the bullet-riddled car and darted into the apartment-house as the wail of a siren announced the approach of the police.

He rapped at a door on the second floor, and a moment later a girl was sobbing hysterically in his arms. For ten minutes he was busy soothing and reassuring her. As she grew quiet, he explained to her what had happened. Her pretty, piquant face grew pale as she listened, and she clung to him fiercely.

"So," the ex-racketeer concluded, "that's the end of it. I'd have quit peacefully, but they wouldn't have it that way, so I quit in spite of hell! Call a taxi, dear, while I take off this darned vest. I'm through with it. The cops must have the mess cleaned up by this time. Tell the taxi to step on it, as we've only forty minutes to make the train."

NEXT morning Hall Morrow and the girl stood on the observation platform of a westbound train that was pulling into Des Moines.

"I'm so happy, Hall," whispered the girl, pressing his arm.

"So am I," Morrow concurred. "I'll be happier after we've stopped and seen that preacher."

"And put all that money in a bank," added the girl. "It scares me to have so much with us. Twenty-seven thousand dollars! Did you really make all that working for those awful bootleggers?"

"Well,"—and Morrow grinned—"I managed to collect that much."

"Why Frank–how disgusting!"

Note to Medical and Dental profession:
When prescribing a mouth wash for *germicidal* purposes, please make certain that it is a germicide: and not merely a preparation which is only deodorant and astringent.

IF you, or any member of your family have the slightest evidence of dandruff, we urge you to try this treatment, which has benefited thousands:—

Simply douse Listerine, full strength, on the hair. Vigorously massage the scalp forward, backward, up and down. Repeat this treatment for several days, using a little olive oil in case your hair is excessively dry.

You will be amazed at the speed and thoroughness with which Listerine gets rid of dandruff. Even severe cases that costly so-called "cures" failed to improve, have responded to the Listerine method. We have the unsolicited word of many to this effect.

There is no mystery about Listerine's success used this way:

Dandruff is an infection caused by germs. Full strength Listerine is powerful against germs—though so safe it may be used in any body cavity.

Indeed, Listerine's germicidal action is so intense that it kills 200,000,000 of the virulent S. Aureus (pus) and B. Typhosus (typhoid) germs in 15 seconds—both noted for their resistance to antiseptics. Yet its effect on tissue is healing.

Naturally then, Listerine is effective against other infections of lesser nature. Use it at the first sign of dandruff. Lambert Pharmacal Co., St. Louis, Mo., U. S. A.

LISTERINE gets rid of dandruff

The safe antiseptic *Kills* **200,000,000** *germs in* **15** *seconds*

THE FRIENDS YOU FIND IN THE BUSH

(Continued from page 78)

as they went, until the throbbing tones were lost in dim vibrations through the distant forest.

For a time all was quiet. But an hour before dawn a new voice warned all and sundry that another emperor was striding regally to water. This lion had the deepest voice of all.

Far away I heard him coming, and in imagination I could see that loose and careless swagger, that slow and even tread so steady and so starkly confident. Every little while he paused to speak of blood in thunderous, awe-inspiring tones. The Prince of the Bush seemed to say with the Prince of Denmark: "Now could I drink hot blood and do such bitter business as the day would quake to look on." Apparently he wished to be sure that no living—or dead—thing within twenty miles should fail to hear his grim ukase.

At last he reached the river quite close to camp, and his roar resounded through the trees, reverberating like the bass notes of an organ played within a narrow sepulcher. The world stood still, it seemed, abashed and fearful in his presence. No baboon barked; no monkey chattered from his limb; no shrinking dweller in the bush dared to interrupt or raise his voice in that most monstrous presence. . . . . I should like to have accorded me, just once, the respect that a lion receives every night of his life.

MY watch showed less than an hour before dawn would filter through the trees, and still Almighty Voice seemed to be in no hurry to leave the water. I sat up under the mosquito-net on my cot. Here, apparently, was a lion not yet entitled to flaunt the Phi Beta Kappa key. Or perhaps here was great Cæsar himself thundering down his latest decrees to the abject populace in the Forum; too imperial, too much the haughty tyrant, to leave before the spirit moved him.

I lighted the lantern and had breakfast a half-hour before dawn. Then, fifteen minutes before the light was strong enough to show the sights clearly, I handed the lighter gun to Arabi and took the heavy gun myself. We hurried through the open trees, Arabi a pace or two behind. We walked perhaps a quarter of a mile, and now the light was almost perfect. The sun had not yet risen, but brush and trees stood out in sharp and clear perspective. We had burned off the high grass along the river several days before, and the country was now open forest with scattered patches of brush and some unburned grass—an ideal place for stalking, just enough brush for concealment, and with long vistas through the trees.

We hurried on—and then as I looked ahead, here came Almighty Voice himself, just fifty yards away, strolling casually in our exact direction. His head was up, but he was looking to the right and had not seen us. A low, impatient rumble came from his hairy chest; a savage protest at the coming of the dawn. I crouched and whispered back to Arabi:

"Ahsud! Lion!"

A stunted bush some twenty feet ahead was almost in a line between us and the lion. I motioned guardedly; and Arabi and I, keeping that bush in line, eased forward swiftly, stooping low, and crouched behind it. And then it flashed across my mind that Arabi was totally unskilled in the lore of handling weapons, untrained in bearing guns for white men. He might lose his nerve in the face of a sudden charge, and scatter for a handy tree. I took the lighter rifle from his hand, cocked it and laid it on the ground beside my foot, so if Arabi should take to cover, the second gun would still be with me. That there would be no time to use it did not enter my head at the moment—you cannot think of everything.

WITH the most stately, majestic tread Almighty Voice still sauntered directly toward us, entirely unconscious of our presence. His mane, magnificent and black, but torn by brush and thorns, grew wildly out beyond his massive head and rolled from side to side with every swinging movement of the shoulders. As I raised the gun and watched him marching on so close, I was utterly astonished by his size and by the thickness of those heavy legs. The loose and easy freedom of his carriage impressed me with a sense of his enormous weight and strength. He must have weighed fully five hundred pounds.

His proud bearing had nothing furtive or even watchful about it. He swung along as if he held a deed to the entire Sudan. Everything that walks in his country, except perhaps the elephant, had always given him the road. Confidence in those corded muscles that never yet had failed him in a hundred combats was supreme; his every movement advertised it to the world. His lower jaw was loosely open, and he growled, or rather rumbled, to himself again as if disgusted with the world and everything in it. He looked every inch the Killer, with that bristling mane and those round, staring yellow eyes. There is something in the eyes of a wild lion that I cannot find the word for. I suppose it is savagery raised to the *nth* power. Anyway, seen under certain conditions it will never be forgotten.

When nerves are tightly strung and the mind is keyed to unaccustomed heights, it is surprising how Time apparently stops and waits, while Thought speeds on and does the work of hours in a moment. I remember thinking, among a host of other things, as I raised the gun:

"No wonder conquerors of old led fettered lions in triumphal marches through the streets of Rome!"

I THOUGHT too, and much more to the point, that should the first shot fail to break a heavy bone or knock him down, he could be almost upon me by the time the second cartridge was ready in the chamber. I was shooting a bolt action, .425-caliber rifle, a good and sufficient gun. But the cartridges were hardpoints which I had filed slightly across the tips in the dum-dum fashion, to take the place of soft-points that had not arrived before I left Khartoum.

Sighting for the chest—I fired. And it was as if the bullet released a spring of steel that worked those sturdy legs. The big brute did not fall, or stand and look around bewildered for a second, as you might expect. He sprang forward instantly. And as he landed from that spring, his head was low, and his round, glaring eyes, burning like coals fanned by a high wind, gleamed with the most noticeable and savage eagerness—and his legs were going like the spokes of a moving wheel—a blur of legs. He came on at top speed, running low, almost hugging the ground. That rush was like a whirlwind.

The gun-bolt snapped back. The empty shell flew out, and another was shoved home like lightning. The operation was entirely subconscious and as fast as my hands could make it. But fast as that operation was—when I sighted a second time, he was almost up to us, but strangely enough, about thirty feet to the right. Then I saw the error in his sudden judgment. A larger patch of brush stood thirty or forty feet to our right and a little behind us. This had caught and held his eye as the place where the shot had come from. It was a large, high stand of brush, with two small trees rising from its center. It stood out, an island in the open, level wood. Our bush had been too small to seize his quick attention.

HIS savage rush for the larger brush-patch brought him almost straight in our direction, and he was now abreast of us and thirty feet to the right. A second shot also failed to knock him down. In a curious way, however, it moved his body three or four feet sidewise, as if a great wind had blown him off his path. This slightly checked his valiant rush. At that moment he must have seen us, for busy as I was, I saw him swing his head our way and make a move to turn. I shot again. That bullet knocked him down. But so great was his forward speed, in spite of the slight check given by the second shot, that he rolled over and over, into the edge of the brush-patch behind us and a trifle to the right, and disappeared in tangled grass and bushes.

At this most critical moment, with a wounded lion in thick bush no more than forty feet away, Arabi, giving a typical illustration of the fine headwork of the untrained native, jumped wildly to his feet at my back and waving his skinny arms he yelped, at the top of his rawhide lungs:

"Kollus! Kollus!" (Finished! Finished!)

Shades of Nimrod! The show might be only at its start, for all we knew. Was the lion badly hurt? Was he alone, or had he, like Cæsar, been traveling with a senate at his heels? With a yank I pulled Arabi down and hissed with an intensity of concentrated venom that would have done credit to a sizable snake-farm:

"Etnain!" Another!

I had seen no other, and I dared not take my eyes from that bush long enough to look for one. But the idea, being new to Arabi, would give him something besides celebrations to think about. It would at least keep him still.

How Colgate's Cleans Crevices Where Tooth Decay May Start

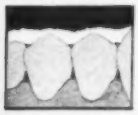
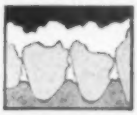


Diagram showing tiny spaces between teeth. Note how ordinary, sluggish toothpaste (having high "surface-tension") fails to penetrate deep down where the causes of decay may lurk.



This diagram shows how Colgate's active foam (having low "surface-tension") penetrates deep down into the crevices, cleansing them completely where the toothbrush cannot reach.

Colgate's is most economical—the 25c tube contains *more* toothpaste, by volume, than any other nationally advertised brand priced at a quarter.

This Cleansing Foam gives teeth an extra protection

In addition to polishing, it penetrates the tiny spaces between teeth... washing out the impurities which mere surface brushing can't dislodge.

OF course, you want sparkling white teeth. Colgate's polishes them brilliantly, with a soft chalk powder, a material used by all dentists to polish teeth safely.

But Colgate's does *more*. Its famous penetrating foam flushes out the decaying food particles hidden in the crevices and spaces between teeth . . . giving a hygienic bath where ordinary dentifrices can't reach.

Thus Colgate's gives you an *extra* protection. Its *washing*-action enables it to get down into the tiny, hard-to-clean places and flood out decaying food particles in a manner approved by modern dental science.

Superiority in cleansing has made Colgate's the largest selling toothpaste in the world—used by more people, recommended by more dentists than any other toothpaste.

If you have not become acquainted with Colgate's may we send you a generous trial tube and an interesting booklet on the care of the teeth and mouth? Just mail the coupon.

For those who prefer it, Colgate's comes in powder form. Ask for Colgate's Dental Powder.

WARNING! Don't attempt to "doctor" your mouth with a dentifrice. A toothpaste cannot cure pyorrhea; cannot permanently correct acid mouth; cannot firm the gums. Its one and only function is to *clean* . . . any other claim is false and misleading. Self-medication is dangerous, Go to your dentist frequently... let *him* take care of the health of your teeth and gums.

FREE COLGATE, Dept. M-611, P. O. Box 375, Grand Central Post Office, New York. Please send a trial tube of Colgate's Ribbon Dental Cream, with booklet "How to Keep Teeth and Mouth Healthy."

Name.....

Address .....

The brush forty feet away parted, and with a grunt so deep and vibrant that it seemed actually to shake the ground, the lion hurled himself straight for us. His mouth was open wide; his shaggy mane stood out beyond his flattened ears; and his eyes blazed with what appeared to be real fire—the molten fire seen through the open door of a blast furnace. Never in dreams or childish nightmares have I beheld such a picture of fury. In the same split-second that this hairy catapult registered itself on my consciousness, the gun was up and the shot fired. No time to catch sights. No time to think of anything. No time for numbing fear to enter the mind. That shot was instinctive. And the lion crumpled like a pole-axed ox, one jump—some twenty feet—from where I worked the bolt again with clicking speed to slam another cartridge home.

He lay relaxed and limp, his legs beneath his heavy body. I kept the rifle on that twitching torso while Arabi, with frightened eyes, watched nervously about for another lion that he thought I had seen. The brute was not yet dead, and the swelling muscles of the back heaved spasmodically; now and then a gurgling grunt warned us that the valiant spirit had not flown. Remembering the old Antæan fable of strength renewed from the ground, I walked to the side where I had a clear shot for the heart and put a bullet behind the shoulder.

Arabi, of course, then let go and staged a fantastic one-man Parade of the Wooden Soldiers:

"Ahsud kebir! Wahush sari! Kebir kamel!" Heated observations upon the courage and ferocity of Almighty Voice.

NEVER have I seen a beast with such superb and perfect muscles. The weight and thickness of a big wild lion are much greater than those of pallid specimens seen in cages at the Zoo. The difference is the same as that between a small, anemic office-man who all his life has handled nothing heavier than a pen, and a burly athlete, say the wrestling champion of the world. To pull down a horned and massive buffalo fighting for his life is no small feat of strength. And before you have seen the muscles on a good-sized wild lion, it is hard to visualize a member of the cat family with strength and nerve enough to tackle such a job.

While Arabi was on the way to camp for a pack-camel, I checked the shots. The first had merely grazed the chest, and had accomplished nothing but to rouse his fighting spirit. The second, the one that so strangely moved him sidewise from his course, had struck the center of the right shoulder; a lucky bull's-eye on a target moving with such terrific speed. It should have shattered the shoulder-blade and gone through that stout heart. But I had filed it too much. Against the solid muscle with the heavy bone behind, it had mushroomed, and flown to pieces. The shoulder-blade had not been pierced or broken. The third, the shot that knocked him down the first time, had entered softer parts farther back and had behaved as a bullet should. The fourth, the one that felled him like a pole-axed ox, had caught him in the center of the chest,—where the first should have hit,—and it evidently had been filed very little, for it plunged through the heavy chest muscles and ranged backward through the vital organs. The fifth, the *coup-de-grâce*, entered just behind the second, or shoulder-shot, and reached the heart.

Old Pythagorus of classic memory sacrificed an ox upon the day he solved the forty-seventh theorem of Euclid. I had no ox to sacrifice—but doubt it not, I found more simple joy and innocent relief in the fortunate solution of that lion than if one hundred and forty-seven of Mr. Euclid's most difficult annoyances had fallen to the feeble bullets of my brain.

If the lion had known exactly where I was at first and so not made the one slight error and chosen the wrong bush in his furious rush, he would have been in springing distance at the moment of the second shot. And then—would that second shot have reached the heart or brain and stopped him instantly? I think the chances heavily against it.

Yes, had I brought along a fatted ox, I would have thankfully sacrificed him on the spot.

HE LIED LIKE A GENTLEMAN

(Continued from page 61)

The husband lunged, avoiding René's counter. The second counter caught the blade barely in time; and René, imperturbable René, gasped.

"*Stop*, gentlemen!"

Both points dropped; both principals stepped back. The seconds approached René.

"Nothing—through the loose of my shirt, see?"

There was no blood; the body had not been touched. The seconds returned to the edge of the little clearing; and the physician, who had picked up his bag, replaced this on the grass. The two points went up. Very cautiously René and the husband moved in again.

NOW René was panic-stricken for the first time in his life. Only he and the husband realized how close to death he had been in that instant; and only he himself realized the horrible fear which had swarmed into his body and was pounding at his nerves like a million little madmen armed with hammers. His poise remained perfect; his parry was just as quick, just as accurate; but he resisted a terrific impulse to back away from that bright, menacing strip of steel which danced in front of him.

His confidence gone, he began to talk.

"M'sieur thinks himself very clever. . . . . Did she ever show you this?"

His left arm came down, and he fumbled with the opening of his shirt. He drew forth a small blue bag of thick, slippery silk, which he had taken from Eleanor's dressing-table. A fancy little thing; Lord knows what Eleanor had used it for, or why René had stolen it. But he had it now, a sentimental souvenir which had been pressed against his heart. The seconds, if they saw it, which was unlikely, would believe it a handkerchief. The husband knew better. He recognized it, and his rage was redoubled.

He advanced wildly. The attack was no less dangerous for that reason. René retreated in haste, for the instant with no thought but of the two blades. His left arm snapped up to its proper position, and it was not until later that he realized he no longer held the bag; he supposed it had fallen back into his shirt.

No matter. The effect had been precisely what René had wished. Dueling was a matter of nerves, nothing else, when the principals were evenly matched. There was only one thing to do, and that was madden this man into making a false move.

"M'sieur has no more adroitness with the sword than with love. . . . . What a fool to think of keeping such a lovely woman for himself!"

His lips were parted, but they did not move. His voice—even, very low—was just loud enough for the husband to hear. The seconds, René knew, were not aware of the talking. The husband was too angry to stop the duel because of this technicality; and the husband, René was grimly determining, would not live to tell of it afterward.

Some of René's confidence was returning. He had discovered that the husband, as he grew more angry, tapped in tierce with increasing force. It was a very bad habit. Perhaps René could make it a fatal habit—avoid one of those taps, slip under the blade, lunge.

But not quite yet. He wanted first to regain complete control of his nerves. Lunging full-length at this antagonist would be no safe business at best, for the fellow could riposte, René was certain, with lightning speed.

"Did her arms used to hang at her sides when you kissed her, as though she had no power to move for passion? . . . . A clever trick, m'sieur. . . . . But you would not know of it, for she would not give you all she gave me."

The chubby wet face was furious now. The thick breast was heaving. The black eyes under black brows were furiously ablaze.

Step by tiny step the husband was being forced back.

René smiled.

The husband, stiffening when he realized that he was close to his end of the clearing, tapped harder than ever in tierce.

Adroitly René avoided the blade, slipping under. His right foot shot out; his left arm dropped. He went in.

The lunge itself was perfect. Yet somewhere in that infinitesimal fraction of a section something went wrong, and René's blade only slid through the loose of the other man's shirt. The riposte was quicker than thought. The husband's blade entered René's body between the third and fourth ribs on the left side.

RENÉ'S second could not understand how such an expert fencer had missed so good an opening. But the husband knew—for it was the husband's second who picked up the little blue silk bag from under René's right foot.

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HIS SIDE OF IT

(Continued from page 93)

in my mind for some time, as a matter of fact. But while Mr. Austin was ill, I felt that I had to stand by."

"I hope you'll give us time to find the right man to step in here before you go. When were you expecting to make a change?"

Probably thinking of saving on his salary, thought Jerry in cold rage.

"I'd like to get away by the end of January."

"Well—that will give us three weeks. That ought to do. I'm sure you know that I wish you every success."

"Thanks," said Jerry, and they shook hands. "Do you want to go over the office now?"

"Oh, no—not at present. We'll probably be sending a man up in the course of the next few weeks. He's rather an expert in office management. You can put him on to local conditions, and in the way of anything he ought to know."

"Be very glad to."

Beamsley's whole manner was changing now. He could safely relax. For things were settled.

"How's that bandit bridge-game of yours?" he asked. "Are you still standing out for doing away with the negative double?"

"Those conventions are bad business," said Jerry. "You can't get away from it."

ON that note they parted, Jerry staying behind while Beamsley went on to whatever business or social transaction lay just ahead. Jerry stayed at his desk, looking vainly for firm paths through dissolution. It had been a relief to tell Beamsley that he wasn't going to knuckle under, that he wasn't going to be anybody's hired man; but as the vigor which came from defiance died away, it left a cavernous doubt. Just where was he going to turn? He'd have to do it quickly, too, before the story got about that he'd been let out. Besides, he'd need to get his hands on some money. He'd get his salary just until the end of the month, and after that he'd have to see that there was an income from some other source.

The shut-off part of his mind opened up again. There was the question of Fanny, rushing in. What was she going to do? Would she even be there when he went back to the house tonight?

For a few minutes he fell into a mood which almost surprised himself. He would have liked just then to get out from under everything—to run away, to leave all the responsibility and trouble ahead to take care of itself. He thought of trains and distance and other cities and countries, where these things couldn't pursue him. It was the state of mind in which men can desert armies and run away from their wives, but Jerry did not follow it very far. It was not his kind of mood, and he didn't let it ride him. After all, a fellow had to go ahead, no matter what happened to him, play the game and take his punishment.

Some one had entered the office unannounced. He looked up, conscious of it, and saw Fanny.

"Hello," he said, rising and instantly on guard.

She came closer and sat down in the very chair that Beamsley had vacated. Jerry, slouched down again in his own, noticing his wife's beauty with an odd sense of having nothing more to do with it, no claim left. She was still so young. There'd be a flock of men after her, he thought bitterly, as soon as he was out of the way.

"I didn't want to talk at the house," she said. "It's better here."

"Any place you say. I can't see that location makes much difference. What's on your mind?"

"I've thought a lot," she said, "but I don't see any point in our trying to go on living together."

"No—the point of that has never been very clear to you."

"You're savage under the surface, aren't you?" asked Fanny.

"Am I?"

"Why should you say a thing like that last?"

"Isn't it true? You didn't marry me. You took on an experiment in marriage—just set up your laboratory."

She stared at him.

"Can you give me a cigarette?" she asked at length.

He took out a package and laughed.

"It's one of the few ways in which I've never failed you, Fanny. Here you are."

"You make it very clear," she said, "that there's no use in even making a try at going on. You're too resentful. I suppose all men are like that when they're found out."

"Not quite through with the experiment even yet, are you?"

She smashed the cigarette which she had just lit.

"Let's not go on like this! I can't bear it. It's fighting—as much as if we were doing it with our fists."

"Want to try that?"

FANNY became quite pale. "What I came to say was that we must make some arrangement about the house. Our lease doesn't expire until May, and it probably couldn't be sublet. We'll lose a few months' rent."

"Stay there. You like the place. I never did. It's never been a home. I'll get out."

"I could go to my father's house."

"Why there?"

"The baby's small. He's got to be comfortable. There's no use being dramatic at his expense, and that's what cheap lodgings might mean. Besides, my mother might help look after him while I get a job. I can pay board there."

"I don't think that's the way to do it. Stay where you are. I prefer to leave. I'll go and live somewhere else, and your friends will soon get the general idea."

"I want to make it clear, Jerry, that it's not just because of the girl herself. This isn't a Purity Crusade. It's because of your attitude on the whole thing."

"Sure."

"I couldn't believe you after this."

"No—why should you?"

"I've thought a lot about it. It's such a common sort of mess, and such a cheap, obvious way out."

"That hurts you more than anything else, doesn't it? You hate being commonplace, Fanny. It's got you, for once."

"We don't have the same ideas about marriage—that's really the trouble."

"We hadn't from the beginning."

She drummed on the table, refusing to answer, concentrating on what must be done.

"Your idea may be best. You can go to your club. After all, why not? You go back to just what and where you were before. That's where men win. Marriage was only an interlude for you. Your business goes on. You pick up your old way of living. You always liked it."

He was tempted to tell her then about the collapse of everything and the chaotic future ahead, but held his tongue. She might think he was asking for mercy, or deliberately confusing the issues.

"Well, that's one way to look at it," he agreed.

"But I don't want you to think that it's because I'm jealous of that girl. The main thing is that you're different, Jerry."

"Different as hell," he said.

"We couldn't get on in peace or respect."

"Not possibly."

She seemed to wince at that quick response.

"When?" she asked.

IT was the second time in two hours that he had been asked for a date on which he would be ready to move on. He had an ironic and preposterous impulse to say to her as he had said to Beamsley: "By the end of January." But he did not.

"I can clear out in an hour. I'd like to have a look at the kid, if you don't think it will leave a mark."

"Don't hurry. I'm not going to have any hysterics. And I'll do no talking about it, Jerry."

"Oh, you'd better ask your friend Dorothy for a little advice," he said viciously. "She's good at breaking up homes, that hard-eyed one!"

Fanny lifted her hand, almost involuntarily, as if to guard against a remark like that.

"If I only understood what has happened to you!" she said.

He could have cried out to her then, that what he needed was not understanding but love—only one word that could go past justice into sympathy.

"Well, it makes an interesting problem. Ought to give you and all your friends something to chew over."

She said: "I'd better go along."

"Good luck!" answered Jerome. "Don't worry about my being around much longer. I'll make some arrangements pretty soon. Today or tomorrow. And of course I'll take care of the rent and send you your usual allowance."

"After a little that wont be necessary."

"Well, I'll deposit it as usual anyway," he said, and wondered just where he was going to scare up the money.

"Good-by," said Fanny.

"Thanks for coming in," he answered. "It's a good idea to have a smash like this all shipshape."

She went hurriedly, as if in panic.

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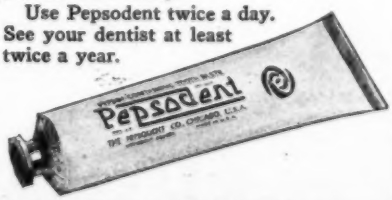

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Chapter Eleven

BILL LOVETT quite apparently didn't know what to say. He was no idealist in regard to human conduct, and the lapses of his fellows were no surprise to him. He often said that his earliest school had been in his uncle's saloon.

"And it was a good saloon, too," Bill always added; "never got too rough."

After that apprenticeship he had picked up a bit of education here and there, and had gone into the contracting business. Nobody knew exactly what Bill was worth, or whether it was much or little. But he always knew all about the awarding of big road contracts, whether he handled them or not. He could curse men into action and into conscientious labor more quickly than any other contractor. And he invariably went to church every Sunday and was devout to the point of superstition. Men were no secret or disillusion to him. But at the moment he was greatly disturbed by one of them.

"You're letting yourself go to pieces, Jerry. That's what you're doing."

"I seem to get an awful lot of free advice that I can't use, Bill," answered Jerry.

"I know. But look at you!"

Jerry hadn't looked at himself since morning. He hadn't enjoyed the sight then.

"You look," he said to Bill; "it's so much easier for you."

Bill did not grin in the old affable way.

"You're a swell fellow, Jerry, but you don't act right. It's none of my business, I know—you don't have to tell me that. But you've got to be reasonable. Here you are—out of a job—"

"God knows I tried to get one," said Jerry.

"Yes," answered Bill, "I know. You tried to get some of the big fellows to turn out their own sons and let you handle their business. You went at it all wrong, Jerry. You ought to have known enough to hold on to what you had until you got something better."

BRIEFLY Jerry characterized the whole Beamsley organization, and Bill remarked that talk like that wasn't going to get him anywhere.

"Of course," he added, "a man's personal affairs are his own business. But there's been a lot of talk about yours, my boy. Your wife—"

"Leave her out," said Jerry.

"I only want to say," Bill proceeded calmly, "that from all accounts she has treated you very white. There was this Pratt girl. Everyone saw you with her, and those who hadn't soon heard about it. My God, Jerry, what did you want with a girl like Stella Pratt? You couldn't expect any woman to stand for that."

"I didn't ask anybody to stand for it," said Jerry.

There were times, now, when he almost forgot how everything had started. He only knew that he was always wrong, that he owed a lot of money and hated the very ground he walked on.

"You've got to take a brace," said Bill. "I don't want to put my oar in where it isn't needed or wanted. But you're still just a kid, you know. What's there to it if you go like this? You got in wrong. Maybe it was your fault, and maybe it wasn't. But there it is. The thing is, what are you going to do about it?"

"I suppose that's up to me."

"Sure it is. But nobody's going to give much of a job to a fellow who looks the way you do, Jerry."

"I know the grain business. I can deliver."

"Maybe you can. But the man who could give you the best recommendation on that point happens to be dead. You've got the Beamsley crowd sore at you. You're out of work. That's not much of an equipment to dress up with when you look for a new place."

Jerry was irritated into scraping back his chair. He leaned out of it almost threateningly.

"What's the idea in rubbing it in—all this glad news?"

"I don't want to rub it in. But you go on the way you're going, and you'll turn panhandler in the end."

Jerry swore vaguely and defiantly.

"I've only one thing to suggest. That's this: I've got some big work coming on up near the border. Now, you don't know a thing about contracting, Jerry. You haven't even been a surveyor. But I'll take you on just on the chance, because you can do some things. You can go up there as my foreman's assistant and learn how to make roads. I know you can get on with men. And you wouldn't mind its being rough. It would make you over."

Jerry seemed to be thinking it over.

"It's not my game, Bill," he said at length; "and besides, I've got one or two lines out. I'm expecting something pretty good to turn up."

Bill did not ask what they were. He knew the vague lingo of men on the edge.

"I guess that offer came a little late," he said, half to himself. "Well, I wish you'd think it over. It's nice country up that way. Mosquitoes are pretty thick, but you soon get used to them."

"Thanks for the offer. I'll keep it in mind," said Jerry. "And about that other matter, Bill?"

Lovett argued no further.

"I can do that, all right. I guess I wont sell your interest in the Bear Lake place to anybody, though. I'll buy it myself, Jerry. I've had a little extra cash lately."

"It's good value. I'll bring around my shares, then." Jerry paused. "I hate to let it go, as a matter of fact. It's the last thing I've hung on to. But they don't want me around up there."

"Well—" said Bill noncommittally.

"I'll bring the shares over tomorrow. You don't want to give me a check now in part payment, do you, Bill? It just happens that it would be a great convenience. I'm—"

"Ready money's the most convenient thing I know," said Bill dryly, and wrote a check.

JERRY was grateful for the sign of trust that gave him a personal check for his shares without asking for a receipt. There was a noticeable slump in his credit lately.

He went over to the bank and made out two deposit-slips. One was for himself. He was overdrawn, so this money

was already well eaten into. On the other deposit slip he wrote his wife's name and pushed it under the receiving teller's grating. He had no idea of what money Fanny had now, nor how much she needed. She had written him a note sometime ago to tell him that she could get along without money from him, but as long as he wasn't divorced, he told himself, he was going to give her what he could. Lately it hadn't been much. But it always gave him a moment's peace to make a deposit for her. He had put one in when he had sold his membership in the University Club, and one on the day after a big gambling game—the last he'd been asked to sit in, for everyone knew now that he was just about down and out.

Fanny, he knew, was still living in the same place. She must have renewed the lease or be renting from month to month. Once in a while he walked by there at night. Not often, lately, for there were always memories to rush out and chase him away.

Mr. Ransom, his father-in-law, seeing him on the street, recognized, from experience, the signs of Jerry's idleness. He crossed the street to avoid meeting Jerry, but he was troubled.

Owen Moore, meeting Jerry on the same afternoon, did not cross the street. He stopped, shook hands and suggested a visit to a near-by speak-easy.

"Good," said Jerry.

THE speak-easy was a dull little refuge, badly lit and worse aired, furnished with no elegance and scant comfort, as if its proprietor realized that the people who came there would very shortly have no interest in anything except the alcoholic environment which they would create.

Owen said, "Well—" and let an imaginary toast go at that. They both had a drink.

They discussed the merits of the place and the liquor. Owen took another drink. He did not look at all healthy. There seemed no color even far below the surface of his skin.

"Not bad," said Jerry, "considering what they make it out of."

"Why don't you lay off it?" asked Owen. "This stuff is made for bums like me who can't get insurance anyhow."

"What do you think I am?"

"Well, I don't know. You're married to Fanny."

"I'm a swell success at that."

"As I remember, I told you that it would be a hard job," said Owen. "But that's no reason for lying down on it."

Jerry's eyes began to smolder, but Owen went on:

"I wish you'd put it over. It's very disappointing, especially for Fanny. It will spoil her. She's not one of these old maids that drifts in and out of marriage. I don't care much about women. They're all either too hard or too soft. But I'd like to see Fanny come through."

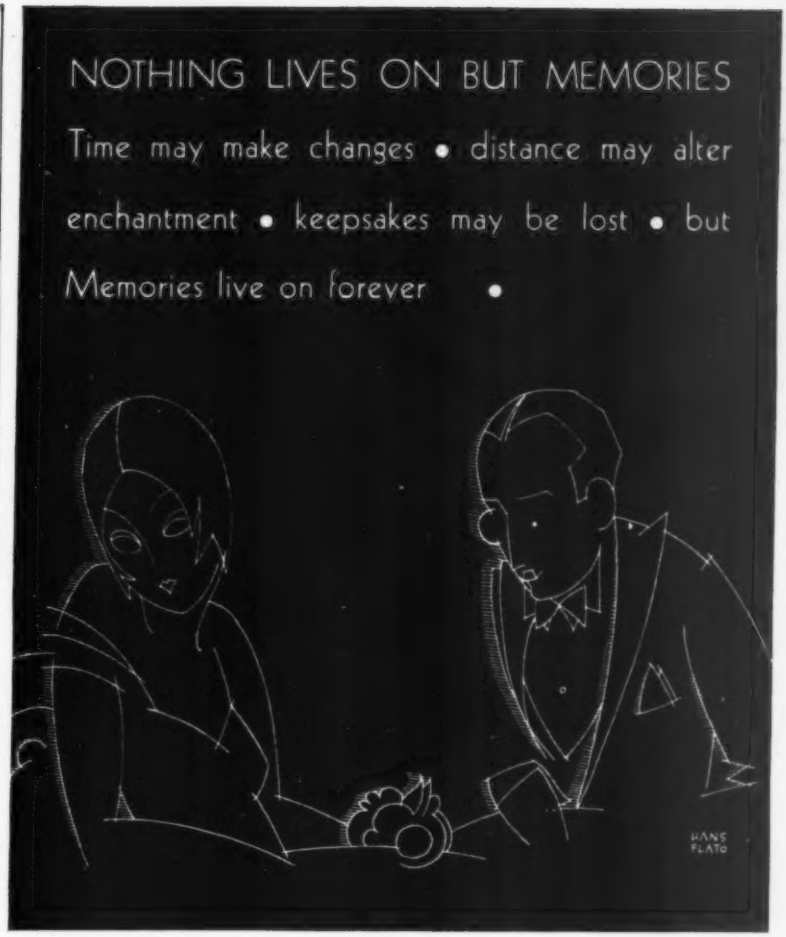
Curiosity suddenly got the better of Jerry.

"Have you seen her lately?"

"Last night—at the Salviners. She danced with great competence."

Jerry knew.

"She told me not to drink anything today. I said all right, and here I am. Like you, I'm apt to let Fanny down."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Jerry asked, against his own reluctance: "Is she all right?"

"I shouldn't say so. She's unhappy. That's your work."

"Well, she doesn't want me around."

"She doesn't want anybody else," said Owen, "though I suppose Bartlett may wear her down eventually. He's a mean bird under his golden fleece—I'd hate to see that happen."

"He's got me skinned," said Jerry.

Owen's voice did not seem to have any body to it. He was going to die one of these days, thought Jerry.

"You know, Jerry, I don't believe you're yellow."

"I'm an awful funny color sometimes," said Jerry grimly.

"You had a tough break. The thing that gets Fanny is that she didn't know you'd lost your job when she put out the home fires."

Jerry scowled.

"I didn't lose my job."

"I don't care who drew first blood," said Owen; "but anyway, that proud and secret stunt of yours certainly piled on the agony for Fanny. She feels she was responsible for what happened in a business way."

"She can forget that," answered Jerry. "It was all in the cards."

"Are you two going to string things along indefinitely?" Owen asked.

"What do you mean?"

"Why don't you clean things up for Fanny?"

The implication was entirely clear. But Owen was not offensive. In his interest there was not only detachment but a friendliness that did not push its way in.

"Fanny can get a divorce. I can't."

"She wont get it on the obvious grounds," said Owen. "She doesn't like such evidence."

"Well, in a few more months she can get one for desertion. Or she can pick any grounds she likes."

All sorts of questions were hammering in his head. But he couldn't ask them.

"I want to ask you something," said Moore. "I'd like to stake you to a start, Jerry. I happen to know an opening. As a matter of fact, I'm thinking of buying an interest in a grain firm. It was offered to me the other day. I haven't a lot of money, but I could swing it. And you could go in and do the work."

Jerry said: "You have been drinking, Owen. But you're a grand sport."

"No. I'm clear as daylight. And this idea didn't just come to me, you know."

He went on to speak of the connection he had in mind, and Jerry had a glimpse of rehabilitation, of a chance to show people what he had in him, of being back among the men he knew.

"It might give you a chance to square things with Fanny," suggested Owen. "You're too damned proud to go back to her empty-handed, I suppose."

"She doesn't want me back."

"There are two schools of thought on that," said Owen dryly.

JERRY saw it all clearly. This was not quite a business offer, nor even a generous one of friend to friend. It was because he loved Fanny too, Jerry thought. But that wouldn't get them anywhere. No man could ever stake him to Fanny. Not to his own wife.

"No," he said. "You're a great man, Owen. But I guess it can't be done. Besides, I've got a chance at another job."

"With a good company?"

Jerry was ashamed of the evasiveness with which he'd have to answer that, as usual. Then he remembered that he really did have a bona-fide offer.

"I'm going up in the North Woods for a few months. A contracting job," he said.

Their eyes met squarely.

"Well, of course we've all got to play it our own way," said Owen.

"That's about the size of it."

"Do you want another drink?"

"No." Jerry stood up and looked down at the thin young fellow etched against the shabby wall. "Is there anything I can do for you?"

It was a strange place for gallantry to flare up, that close, mean little room. But neither of them had any sense of its being unfitting.

"Do for me?" repeated Owen. "Well, I'd take it as a personal favor if you don't waste Fanny. Don't let her become one of these hard, unhappy females who don't believe anyone or anything, who have an ax out for life. She's too good for that, and of course she's too good for most people. Everything has to be fresh for her—no canned stuff, no lies. But she's one of the women who happens every now and then, and makes the upkeep of a very expensive and disagreeable world worth while. Of course I've loved her for years. I've never been able to do anything for her. She's got to have health and strength and truth—and it's a dirty deal to do her out of love. She's not the kind of person who can pick that up as she goes along. But I don't believe that she's the sort of woman who can do very well without it."

Jerry had no answer. It was not a discussion. He was going along with every phrase. It seemed to him that Owen, by the concentration of his feeling for Fanny, was creating her so that she was almost with them. As Owen spoke, there she was, with her delicious blend of tenderness and independence, her impatience with everything shoddy and evasive.

"I missed the boat," said Jerry at length, "but if there's ever a chance again, I'll do what I can. Take care of yourself."

"I do that admirably," said Owen, who was lifting his glass as Jerry went away.

Chapter Twelve

THE living-room in the Minton house, which had been the home of the young Lucases and where Fanny still lived, was cool even on an August afternoon.

"It's the high ceilings, I suppose," said Lois, who appeared more than a little damp and moist.

"Would you like some tea, Lois?" said Fanny. "Or an iced drink?"

"Neither, thanks. I'm dieting. I simply must. Besides, I can't stay. We're going back to the lake for the week-end. It's so heavenly for the children out there. You simply should see them in their sun-suits. Just like pictures! Fanny, are you doing all your work here?"

"Whose else would it be?" asked Fanny.

"But they tell me—Father said—that you were working professionally too. Writing advertisements."

"It's great luck. I can do most of them at home—and at times when young Tom takes naps. Once in a while I go down and do a sketch of a dress and try to figure what would make Minnie Vetch's mouth water and her tight purse open for purchase. Don't pity me. I've a schoolgirl living here too. She stays in at night, and sings modern ballads about her sweetie or something to the baby if I'm out. We get along famously."

"I heard that you were at the Country Club last week."

"It's every word true," said Fanny.

LOIS pulled off her gloves, which were too tight for comfort. She was uncomfortable from the heat, but more so from the things which she had deliberately put upon her mind.

"Aren't you afraid you'll get yourself in a difficult position?"

"There are so many things I fear more," answered Fanny, "like loose lions and croup."

"No. You must be serious. Do you know that people are saying that Hugh Bartlett is trying to have you get a divorce and marry him?"

"They've been listening!"

"Is it true, Fanny?"

Fanny sighed. "Oh, more or less, I suppose."

"What are you going to do about it?"

"Nothing—during the heat-wave."

"Fanny—I don't believe you're happy, living like this."

Fanny's face tightened.

"Well," she said, "that's not very important, is it—in a world full of tidal waves and war reparations and farm relief and advertisements?"

"I know that you hate to talk about it. I've kept away from the subject on that account. But the other night I was lying out in the country just listening to the lake, and I thought about you here all alone. It seemed to me that I ought to talk to you frankly—that it was the only thing I could do to help you. And this is what I want to say, Fanny. If you love Jerome, don't marry Hugh Bartlett in spite of everything. Forgive Jerry."

Fanny looked at her with blank surprise. It had evidently been not at all what she had expected to hear.

"Forgive Jerry?" she repeated.

"Wait," said Lois, with a touch of drama. "I know that you think it's impossible. I've heard—though you never said a word to me—about what was the cause of the break between you and Jerry."

"I wonder if you have," said Fanny, but Lois, intent on revelation, swept on with it.

"You think at first that no woman in the world has ever had to face such tragedy before. But others have, my dear. Most of us carry sad little secrets about with us. Even in my life, dearly as I love Henry and he loves me, in spite of our happy life, there have been,"—she took a breath and made a verbal capital, —"Things."

Fanny said simply: "I'm so sorry."

"At first it's very hard to endure," said Lois. "It seems as if it were, and must

be, the end. I know that for a little while I felt that way. I'll tell you what happened to me—I've never told anyone else, Fanny."

"Don't tell me," breathed Fanny.

"I want to. I made my mind up to do it. I thought my experience might help you, and I want to have you know. A woman came to our house one day. It was about three months before the twins were born. I'd heard her voice on the telephone before—the extension phone, you see, when I happened to pick it up while she and Henry were talking. And I knew at once who and what she was. I suppose she intended to blackmail Henry. That's what he said to me afterward. He said that he never would forget the way I acted. He said, Fanny, that I was superb. Anyway, what I told her—quite calmly—was that I knew all about the whole thing. And Fanny, in a way, I did really seem to know. But I never shall forget those dreadful hours after she went away. When Henry came home, I was controlled again. I told him, and he was horrified—and frightened—it was dreadful to see him in that state. You see, he felt that he might lose me and the children, that he might have sold his birthright for a mess of pottage. That was exactly what he said. I told him that to me he was just like a child who had misbehaved. It is all dreadful, Fanny, but after all, we're grown up and must face these things. And there's something beautiful about the way a woman can forgive a man. I found that out. I think that even if it should happen again, I could perhaps still forgive. Not that it ever will. He told me it wouldn't."

She stopped. Fanny's face was singularly immobile, but it was not at all forbidding. It was only thoughtful.

"Don't you think, Fanny, that you could forgive Jerry for that girl?"

The direct question seemed to jolt Fanny into immediate reply.

"In a minute," she answered. "At least, I could if it were necessary, though I might feel rather a fool while I was doing it. I'm not a very graceful forgiver. But you see, Lois, I didn't really hold the girl against him much. She happened along at a time when I was treating Jerry a little rough. No, I'm afraid it's not a matter of forgiveness in my case."

"Then what is it, Fanny?"

"Jerry didn't like being married to me. I made it too hard."

Lois, thrown completely off the track, was bewildered with shock.

"Oh, Fanny, he was head over heels in love with you."

"He was," agreed Fanny.

"You don't mean to say he's over it?"

"So he gave me to understand," said Fanny in a brittle voice; "and there we are. He's not asking forgiveness."

"BUT what are you going to do with your life?" Lois persisted.

"Continue it. See what comes along. Bring up my child and not consider what happens to me as too important."

"Your situation bothers me so much."

"Don't let it. You have no idea how common situations like mine are. They simply swarm. Dorothy Carey could tell you."

"Isn't it amazing about her husband?"

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"That he really should break into the movies? Is it?"

"But everyone thought he was absolutely no good."

"Well, he isn't, is he?"

"They say," answered Lois, and to hear it may have seemed a direct reply, "that these movie actors make a most tremendous amount of money. And he is to be starred with Magda Verrista. Did you know that? I saw it in a movie magazine the other day. Magda Verrista!"

"He always did take a nice picture. In the romantic manner."

"I don't see why Dorothy keeps on working like that. Surely he could support those children of his now. After all, he should."

"She can support them too."

"Oh, Fanny," said Lois, driven to a mental wall, "you're so terribly modern!"

"Is that what's the matter with me?" asked Fanny. "Sometimes I think I'm just not bright."

Lois' worries took a new turn.

"Fanny," she said, "I don't need to say that what I told you was in the most sacred confidence, do I?"

Fanny, in one of her quick impulses of affection, took her sister's hands, held them tightly and then piled them neatly on top of one another, as if she pressed confidence between them for its safekeeping.

"No—and I do thank you, Lois."

"And you will not think worse of Henry than you did?"

"No," answered Fanny with perfect ambiguity.

WHEN Lois went away, Fanny went back into her living-room, and sitting down at her desk, tried to finish an advertisement. The postman's ring, coming presently, interested her very little, for she expected nothing unusual, but she went to see what he had brought, and found a letter addressed in the blackest ink and written apparently by a none too steady hand. She opened it curiously, the more surprised as she read its contents.

It was from old Mr. Lucas.

"Would you dine with an old man tomorrow at seven o'clock? It has been a long time since I've seen you, and your coming would be a delightful incident among many which have grown tedious. I may not press a dull old man's invitation too far, but it would give me a great pleasure if you accept it."

Fanny considered. Then she sat down again at her desk and wrote a brief, cordial acceptance, going out herself to drop it into the letter-box at the nearest corner. When she came back, the baby was very audibly awake, and one of those hours of pause which she always seemed to be bridging had passed.

She had long since sold the car which had belonged to her and Jerry, and Hugh Bartlett telephoned in the early evening to know if he could take her for a ride and hunt some cool air.

"Do you want to take Dorothy Carey too?"

"You know I don't."

"Well, will you?"

"But what's the idea, Fanny? I want to see you once in a while by myself. If we go to a party, you're always dancing with everyone except me. If I ask you to go out for a ride, you want to take Dorothy Carey along."

"I've an engagement with Dorothy."

"Can't you break it?"

"I can—easily. But I wont."

"All right—then we'll all go."

"No, thanks—I wont bring her on sufferance."

"Fanny, you do treat a man abominably!"

She sighed. "I've heard that before."

"You know what I mean. Are you going to keep me dangling indefinitely? You know what a fool I look. Can't you get your situation regularized and let me have a chance?"

"I suppose I must."

"Of course you must. It's the only fair thing to everybody."

"No doubt."

"And then marry me, Fanny—as you should have in the beginning."

"Should I?"

"And we'll go away until things blow over."

"Or settle. Like dust."

"You're not yourself tonight."

"I'm very mean."

"You need me, Fanny."

"You've got the prescriptions mixed," she said. "Anyway, I'm not going to have you. I'm going to be with Dorothy."

"Tomorrow night, then?"

"I've an engagement. Sorry."

"With whom?"

She was silent.

"Of course it's none of my business. You don't have to tell me. My business is to stay dangling."

"You needn't."

"You'll push me too far one of these days," he said. "A man can stand just so much."

"Is that a threat?"

"You know what I mean."

"So often I'm afraid I do," she answered. "Well, good-by."

FANNY and Dorothy often went out together as they did tonight. They talked frankly of almost everything, but left each other's reserves alone. With Dorothy, Fanny was often a rather serious, slightly tired person, and sometimes in a tea-room or restaurant she did not look very different from other women at the small tables, who ate alone or in the company of others, like themselves. That was what she remarked on tonight to Dorothy.

"These places," she said impatiently, "have such an air of being made for respectable women down on their luck. For women who have lost their men!"

"That's nothing against them."

Fanny laid down her fork on an uninteresting plate. She leaned on her elbow and brooded.

"There's something about every woman in the place who is by herself that makes you feel she's been unable to carry off life well," she said.

Dorothy answered: "The woman in the corner plays the piano beautifully. I know her. And the one who runs the place has one of the best collections of poetry I know."

"But still—"

"They've no men," said Dorothy, and added: "I wonder why you seem to feel that's such a lack, Fanny."

"I don't."

"Yes, you do. That's where we part, really. I don't mind being alone. You do. I wonder if, even with women who are modern, there hasn't got to be one group who want men—or sex—and one which can perfectly well do without it?"

"Do you suppose anyone can do without it?"

"They do. Lots of women. They wouldn't have men around if they could, as husbands or lovers."

"How do you know?"

"Because I'm one of them. You know, Fanny, I didn't tell you at the time, for I was feeling rather flayed by the situation. But Gilbert tried to get me back ten months ago."

"He did?"

"Yes. He wanted the children, for some reason. And he wanted me, perhaps because he knew that at last I was completely indifferent. But there wasn't any use."

"You wouldn't try it?"

"I couldn't. I didn't even like him. I didn't want him to have a thing to do with the children. So I wouldn't let him get back in the picture. He sent me money, and I sent it back. I guess he finally cleared up his debts with a flourish. And then he had this last thundering success, and now I see by the papers that he's going to marry his Magda Verrista." She laughed.

"But you did love him."

"And got over it," said Dorothy. "I like to live without him now. I want to keep my life to myself. No man is going to believe that, of course. But it just happens to be true. I like earning, and bringing up the children without interference."

"You're making a beautiful job of it."

"I do the best I can. And there are all sorts of delicious rewards. Fanny, why don't you go back to Jerome?"

"What? After all this you've just been saying?"

"I've been speaking of myself. This is you I'm talking of now. I think that's what you want to do, and what you should do. You don't get over him, Fanny. And this life seems all in shadow to you, all devitalized."

"Not as bad as that."

"If you don't take on Jerry, you'll end by giving in to Hugh Bartlett."

SUDDENLY Fanny burst out laughing. "It's just as if you were all in a conspiracy," she declared. "Lois tells me to be noble and forgiving. Owen, before they sent him off to the sanitarium, said that I ought to give it a try. You say I've got to have my man! And even my mother—" She grew grave. "I was surprised at what my mother said. This was it—she said: 'If you take on the responsibility for a man's life and drop it, you'll always have a sense of having failed.'"

"Oh, that's true!" agreed Dorothy with a flashing bitterness.

"And she said to me," finished Fanny, "that I'd never be content to have a failure. She told me other things about her own life. It was revealing. She feels that you've got to work with what material and what skill you have. She has a curiously deep sense of responsibility—and no sentimentality at all."

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"Why don't you go to Jerry?" Dorothy repeated.

Fanny laughed again, but Dorothy looked up sharply at the sound of it, for there was a touch of hysteria in it now.

"I tried to," said Fanny, "and he wouldn't let me! I wrote him that I'd probably been primitive and obvious in all my reactions, and that we might try it again with each other. He wrote back that he hadn't anything to offer me. He wrote this." She was quoting now as if the memory was only too letter-perfect: "That he had tried to be the kind of lover I wanted, and had failed; that he had tried to be the kind of husband I wanted, and had failed; that the only thing he could do in the future was not to shape himself to relationships with me, but to be honestly the man he was. . . . . Do I have to spell the words to you? Don't you see that he doesn't want me?"

Chapter Thirteen

OLD Mr. Lucas was going to serve champagne. He knew exactly where the bottle was. He had gone slowly down the cellar steps, for his aged knees bent with difficulty, and made his way to a corner of the fruit-room. There he unlocked the padlock on a great cupboard in the corner, threw open its wide doors, and dozens of diamond-shaped compartments within it were revealed. Most of them were empty, but here and there a bottle still lay carefully upon its side. He knew exactly what he wanted, and laid his hands upon it. It was an excellent vintage, and the last bottle of its kind in Mr. Lucas' possession.

The tablecloth in the dining-room was badly laid as usual, and the silver upon it ill polished. But the old man did not notice those things. He looked to see if there were glasses where they should be, and spoke to the servant about the asparagus, which he himself had purchased and carried home. There was an ill-concealed excitement in his manner as he put on his old, rather wrinkled evening clothes and hunted with fumbling fingers for a white tie—as he shook up a cocktail and waited for Fanny.

She was, as he remembered, from the dinner he had given for her before, and from the day of her wedding, a beautiful woman. As she came into his room with her head held high, his old eyes blinked with satisfaction. She was still most beautiful, not the kind of woman who fattened after bearing a child, he thought.

"You are very good to come and dine with an old man."

"I'm very happy to," said Fanny. "It was one of the pleasantest invitations I've had in a long while. I like coming here."

"It is very gracious to say so."

There were no high electric lights flaring as there had been when Fanny had dined in that house before, in midwinter. A late twilight of midsummer was indifferently kind to the shabby, dignified library where the old man's thoughts and the old man's books kept each other company. There was red caviar for a canape, spread thickly on rye bread.

Mr. Lucas poured his guest a cocktail from the stained silver shaker. She saw that there were three glasses on the tray.

"Shall we drink to your son while we wait for our other dinner companion?"

She smiled and lifted her glass.

"What a delightful toast!"

"To your son and my heir."

"Really?"

"It will not be much. But it gives me pleasure," said the old man.

"And how do you feel about chivalry these days?" he asked, after a minute, chuckling a little.

She said ruefully: "I treated it abominably. I've been consistently horrid to it."

"But didn't you intend to be? Wasn't that your plan?"

"One gets fond of chivalry," said Fanny. "It means so well."

He said: "That shouldn't excuse it. May I fill your glass?"

"Shan't we wait for your other guest?" she asked.

He looked at the clock.

"He'll be here shortly. We might drink to him as we wait, though perhaps it's a waste of excellent gin."

"Is it some one I know?"

"Your husband."

Fanny's whole being seemed to stop. She seemed arrested, in look, breath, thought.

"But surely you know, Mr. Lucas—"

"I've heard, of course," said the old man easily, "that you no longer live together. But I didn't know that would prevent a very modern young woman from dining with her husband. Or have I blundered?"

His voice was very courteous, but there was a suave challenge in it.

Fanny met it.

"No reason in the world," she answered, just as Jerome came in and stood on the threshold, looking as if he did not know whether to go or stay.

"Come in," said Mr. Lucas, and held out his hand. "It's been a long time since I've seen you, Jerry. You're a little behind on the cocktails."

HE turned his back toward his guests as he poured one out, but they did not look frankly at each other. Jerry felt as if he were stepping into a dream. He had not seen her for so long, and he'd forgotten how pale memories were, and how beloved reality was.

"Hello, Jerry," said his wife.

"Hello, Fanny," he replied—determined to be as cool as she was—and accepted the glass his grandfather handed him.

"Jerry has turned buccaneer," said Mr. Lucas. "I understand he lives with roadgangs of Italians, and has learned to swear in many languages, like a parrot."

"You've got to," said Jerry. "Sorry I didn't know this was to be a party. I'm not dressed for one."

He knew that he looked harder and in better form than when Fanny had last seen him. He was wondering how he looked to her. Not like much, probably. She was all over that. Well, this was daring of the old man, and a bit tricky, but he'd done a good turn. Jerry could see Fanny tonight, fill his eyes with her and go back and dream, pretend every once in a while that he'd done it well, that it hadn't been such a flivver.

"You like the new work?" asked his grandfather.

"It's interesting. It keeps you going."

He couldn't help bragging just a little. "Bill Lovett says he thinks it's my line—that I could be a good contractor if I could pick up a little technical knowledge. Of course I always wanted to be an engineer. I like getting out of offices. I'll not get caught in one again for too long."

DINNER was ready and they went out to it. The old man seemed enormously preoccupied with the food. They got through a soup, while he talked about ways of ancient cookery. Then he carved the thick steak and muttered over the inadequacy of the sauce for the asparagus, and poured the champagne with vanity because it was legal and rare. Why was he laying himself out again, Jerome wondered to himself. This was his best stuff. Was it just to make a fool of Jerry, or was he getting senile, or was he honestly fond of Fanny? Jerome was on his guard. He knew so little of guile, and in all these subtle situations he was sure to put his foot in things.

"She's my wife," he thought, "but I've no rights." He remembered that cool letter she'd written suggesting that they try it again and decide not to be primitive, or to take each other so seriously. As if he could take her any other way! Or as if he could stop caring, no matter what happened or how he tried to! She was written on his heart. She was only across the table—and she didn't care for him at all. He could hear that she was talking to the older man, but he did not listen. He knew that careless voice of hers, the voice that could flay you before you knew it.

"You remember the discussion we had that night we dined together before, Jerry?" asked his grandfather.

"What did you say, sir?" Jerry asked.

The old man repeated his question.

"No," said Jerry.

"I recall that I told your wife"—why need he rub that word in, thought Jerry—"that men without sentiment were not a pretty sight. I was just reminding her of her answer. She said that she would be willing to see one. As a matter of fact, Fanny, did you ever see one?"

Jerry, no longer abstracted, looked at Fanny. They both knew the answer.

"Yes," said Fanny, "I did, Mr. Lucas."

"And how did you like it? Are you still convinced men can do without it?"

There was a pause. The bubbles in their thin glasses rose. Fanny's eyes were on neither man, and her face in the dwindling light from the bowed windows seemed very mysterious.

"I think we were both right," she said slowly, in a voice that was a little tired but none the less constant, and with feeling in it that Jerry had never heard before. "I think that sentiment isn't necessary. It wasn't a pretty sight to see a man without it, quite as you warned me. Yet it did not make me cease to love him—nor need him less."

Her words dropped into silence and rested there. They fell into Jerome's heart, deeply, finally, to give it confidence and peace.

"We are privileged," said Mr. Lucas, rising as he had risen on that previous occasion, "to drink to a lady, Jerome."

"To my dear wife," said Jerome, for he was no longer afraid.

THE END

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Be sure you get "Lysol" Disinfectant in the original brown bottle, packed in the yellow carton.

THEY THOUGHT THEY COULD BUY IT

(Continued from page 41)

evening?" Lydia moaned. "There's a nice symphony concert on the air tonight."

"I need cigars anyway," he said.

He backed the car out of the garage. Although the drug-store was only two blocks distant, it never entered his mind to walk. If he had thought of it, he might have walked, but he never thought of it. He parked his car in front of the store with its back wheels to the curb. Behr's Pharmacy was bright with that special colorless glare that belongs to drug-stores. It smelled of disinfectant, perfume, medicine, and ice-cream in tin containers. Behr himself stood behind the kodak counter, with his head in his hands, as if he were dog-tired.

"Hello, Behr," Seth said. Seth was a man of quick, simple, transient emotions. At this moment he liked Behr. That was one of the advantages of living in the suburbs. A man got to know his druggist and his doctor and his minister as friends. It meant good service in emergencies.

"Good evening, Mr. Smith. What can I do for you?"

Seth was one of the few men in Brookstone who dared talk with tradesmen, because he paid in full on the tenth of every month.

"How's tricks, Behr?"

"Not so hot, Mr. Smith. Not so hot."

"I thought you looked seedy. What's the matter? Business bad?"

Behr flushed until his lean face was dark red. He cleared his throat. He had moved out here from Third Avenue only a few years ago, so his voice kept its under-the-elevated timbre, half husky, half nasal.

"I'm sellin' as much as I ever did. But —there will be another little one soon. Expenses is something fierce."

SETH, as a childless man, always felt uncomfortable when other men spoke of their prospective families. Seth could not help thinking: "This little son of a gun can have a child, and I can't. Hollow-chested and bow-legged he is, too. Dumb luck!"

"That's too bad," Seth said. "I often tell my wife a family is a lot of trouble. We—we've been spared a lot."

Behr smiled.

"They're awful cute, though, Mr. Smith. My oldest boy, Vanderbilt, he's a sketch. I'd as soon have ten if I had the money."

"I guess there's a lot we'd all do if we had the money."

"I'd have the money," Behr said darkly, his voice sunk to a rasp, "if the swells in this town would pay their bills."

Seth felt the righteous indignation of the financially solvent.

"You don't say? Honest to God?"

Behr pushed two kodaks apart and leaned across the counter.

"I go crazy, Mr. Smith. Sometimes I think I'll start a cash business. No credit allowed, see? But Popular Drugs has charge accounts. They'd all go to him. I'd lose by it—in the end."

"They do say cash stores are the ones that prosper in this town."

"Sure. Sure they do. Cash groceries and cash meats. But not cash drugs, so long as the Popular lets 'em charge. Now I got the high-toned trade, see? He's got the people on the fifty-cent side. He's got the apartment houses. But if I ask cash, they'd leave me tomorrah."

"Do you have many bad accounts?"

"Most of 'em pay in the end, Mr. Smith. But I have a good long wait—a year—two years. It strikes me funny, how they ride around town in their big cars, throwin' parties at the Country Club, and owin' everybody. When the bill gets too large, they're scared to come in here theirselves and charge on more. So they send their kids in. Oh, they's plenty of dodges. They think I don't *see* through 'em. Or they run up a bill of eighty dollars, see, and they send in ten dollars on account."

"The nerve—the brass nerve! I say if a man can't pay his honest debts—"

"If you speak to 'em about it, they're insulted. 'How dare you!' one lady says to me. 'How dare you!' Says I to her, 'Very well, madam. You don't get no milk of magnesia from me unless you pay for it.' She sweeps right out of the store and goes over to the Popular. I aint namin' no names, see, but you'd be surprised if you knew who she was."

Behr was leaning far over the counter, shaking his forefinger. Beads of perspiration stood out on his narrow forehead. His breath puffed full into Seth's face. Seth experienced that quick revulsion a man feels toward anyone who breathes in his face. Suddenly all this talk seemed too intimate. Suddenly, Seth felt involved with something petty. After all, what right had Behr to talk this way about the best people of Brookstone? He made his living off of Brookstone, didn't he?

"Mrs. Smith sent me down for two books you are saving," he said coldly. No use letting this fellow get too familiar.

Behr subsided like a bottle of fizz when some one claps on the lid. He went to the back of the store and took down two books from a shelf marked: CIRCULATING LIBRARY—3C A DAY—NO DEPOSIT. And whistling, he handed them to his customer.

"Okay," Seth said, and went out with the books under his arm.

LIFE did not puzzle Joe Browning. He had always known just how one went about life. He believed it had a definite progression with certain events. It unrolled like a carpet up to a palace door. One was graduated from high school, went to work in an office, was faithful and diligent, fell in love with the right girl and married, settled down and had children, raised the children to be faithful and diligent—died and went to heaven. That was Life. Why did people make such a fuss about not understanding it? There was nothing to understand. Just a few simple rules to follow. Joe would as soon have altered the pattern of the rug or changed the course of the Hudson River as he crossed over from Jersey City to Barclay Street in the ferry. "Good" people lived in that definite progression. All his friends did. Of course he was aware that people existed who did not follow the pattern. But somehow they did not seem like real people. They were only gray figures in newspaper stories. He had never met one. He did not imagine the love-nester of the tabloids was a man whose body was formed like his own, who liked cooked cereal for breakfast, took aspirin for a cold, and went crazy over comic moving pictures. Joe was fond of saying: "But such things don't happen in *Brookstone.*"

Joe knew there were sorrow and joy in the world. But if a man behaved well, God made up for the sorrow in heaven, where all accounts were balanced. Joe thought of heaven in such terms, because he was an accountant. He had gone to Sunday-school ever since he was four years old, and now that he was married, he taught a class. When he was a boy, he won a gold pin for attending Sunday school a year without missing a Sunday. The next year he won a wreath around that pin; the next, a cross that hung down like a pendant. After that, the Cross-and-Crown series could give him no more. He did not wear that decoration now, although there was a man in his office, the treasurer of the company, who did. As a young man, he had never enjoyed "vice." Once he took a pick-up to the movies and felt acutely miserable. Sin was simply not his talent.

And yet people whose talent for sin amounted to genius liked Joe Browning. He was one of those substantial men. He performed the miracle of being good without being obnoxious. Nobody held it against him that he was unadventurous.

Perhaps they liked him because he did not wear his Sunday-school decorations on his coat, like that other man in the office. He did not wear his goodness where it caught the eye, like some sort of badge. Salesmen did not tell him the latest stories —not because Joe seemed ladylike, but just because. Somehow it didn't fit in.

THIS evening Junior Browning, aged thirteen months, refused to go to sleep. He was teething. His back gums were swelled and hot to the touch. He drooled. There was no use trying to make him stay in his crib. Even iron-hearted parents could not have done that. Amelia and Joe resigned themselves to having him downstairs all evening, wide awake and smiling, as if he knew he was making trouble. He sat between them on the couch and beat his rubber teething-ring on the cushion. In an hour or so he would drop off to sleep from exhaustion, but now he was fresh as a hunting dog. His parents regarded each other wearily over his head. Joe looked old for thirty-two. He was one of those men who seem to have been born gray-haired.

"Tired, Amy? Want me to read you a story?"

"Dead tired. If I'm this tired now, what will I do when I'm heavier? Golly, I'm so tired I could die."

Joe's eyes clouded.

"I wish I earned enough money for you to keep a maid. It seems terrible you should be doing your own work. I ought to be earning more."

"Now, Joe!"

"Look at Clifford Millard. We grad-

uated in the same class. He was kicked out of college, and now look at him—car and chauffeur. Joyce doesn't lift a finger. You ought to have married somebody who could give you an easier life, Amy."

"Don't talk like that. I'm not after an—an easy life. I've got everything I want."

"But you get so tired. If only both of us didn't get so tired. It's like a disease with us. Why—at night we aren't good for anything. We can't even read."

"But you're getting on in business. We're young yet. Just young folks. Didn't Mr. Melcher say you were in line for the next promotion?"

"Sure he did. I'm in line, all right. They've got their eye on me. Only—it's slow. When I see fellows like Cliff Millard, I get impatient. I want to give my wife nice things, too."

"*Sh*, Joe! You'd think money was the only thing in the world. I don't believe I'd take a car if it was given to me. So many accidents."

JOE and Amelia leaned their heads against the couch back. They were silent. Amelia slipped off her pumps. There, that was better.

"As for Cliff Millard," she said, "people tell me he's fast."

"Don't you believe it, Amy. You know how he called me up the other day and took me out to lunch. He's a prince. Don't you let people tell you he's fast."

Amelia was feeling better, now that her pumps were off. She grew more talkative.

"Anyhow, you and I have a lot to be thankful for. When I heard about those poor girls today, I thought how rich I was. I thought: 'Here I have a nice hubby and nice children.' Really, Joe, I'd like to give that poor Pansy a home. I suppose she doesn't know what happiness is—like we have."

Joe had always loved Amelia's quick sympathy. It seemed so womanly.

"Don't worry about Pansy. You can't have the whole world on your shoulders. Maybe if she goes straight from now on, some good man will forgive her past and marry her and she will have a home like ours, and children. . . . . Say, Amy, you should see the new car the Big Boss has got."

Joe spoke reverently of the Big Boss, as a mediæval serf must have spoken of his feudal lord. It is men like Joe who make oppression so simple.

"It's a special sport model, Amy, with all sorts of tricky fittings. I wish you could see it. He was showing us the picture. That's his seventh car. He's having his yacht done over, too. I don't believe J. P. Morgan's yacht is any handsomer."

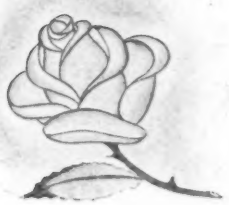
There was no envy in Joe's voice. Only a sort of delight that *his* Big Boss should live in such palatial style. But Amelia was not so impressed.

"Uh-huh. Say, Joe, when we get a car, which would you get—a sedan or an open touring?"

"Open. More fresh air."

"Aw, Joe! I want a sedan. It's so nice then in the winter and rainy weather."

"But you don't get any fresh air. If the windows are closed, you might as well be indoors—and if they're open, you get a draft down the back of your neck."



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Please send me my free copies of the new "Baby's Welfare" and "The Best Baby." My baby is _____ months old.

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(Print name and address plainly)

"Children can't fall out of a sedan. You can put them inside and shut the door and there they are, perfectly safe."

"You never hear of children falling out of touring cars, either."

"Why, you know perfectly well there was Lydia Smith's niece—"

"Anyhow, an open car is better. Be reasonable, Amelia."

Their voices had risen to the pitch of argument. Amelia began to cry. She cried so easily nowadays—the least little thing set her off. Joe began to comfort her, calling himself a clumsy animal without the instincts of a gentleman. He ought to have remembered that Amelia was not herself.

"Precious," he said tenderly, "we wont be getting a car for some years yet. Come, now."

AFTER dinner Clifford Millard felt restless. It was one of those nights when all the furniture in the house seemed out of place, and the air seemed stuffy, and—well, anywhere else looked better. Perhaps it was because Henry, on the way up from the station, had bent a fender. Clifford wished he was out on the high seas, tasting a salt wind, or in the jungle, stalking a tiger. Anywhere but here. Home was monotonous. Why under the sun did anyone rave about home life? He loved Joyce, but a man has to have a little variety. He began to pace up and down his living-room, the way tigers pace in their cages at the Zoo.

There was nothing to do out here in the suburbs. Why had Joyce insisted on moving here? For the children's sake, she said. Huh—they'd get plenty of sunshine in New York. Other kids lived there, perfectly healthy. Hotel life, now, down in the Forties. That was the stuff. Clifford felt a sudden intense yearning for Times Square at the theater hour with the crowds and the policemen and the glare and the girls mincing down the street two by two, and the electric signs flashing on and off, and the black sky overhead, and the news-stand against the Times Building that sold papers from foreign towns, and the taxies moving wheel to wheel.

He wanted to be in a taxi with a woman he was crazy over, so he would not mind the traffic jam. He wanted her eyelids to be painted blue and her fingernails red. He wanted to hear the cop's whistle and feel their taxi move forward with all the other taxies, the red and green and gold of them, rolling over the pavement, until they reached the Park where the lamps made pools of light in the trees, but not too often.

And here he was out in the sticks—with pure little bushes growing around his house and a clean path of tulips down to the sidewalk. What a life for a man with blood in his veins! Sometimes he could not realize he was married. His mind refused to take the responsibility. Of course he loved Joyce—he kept telling himself that, virtuously. He had been crazy for her. But now that it was all over and they had two children, it seemed as if he had been knocked down and married while unconscious. Although he had given Joyce no rest until she consented to be his wife, nowadays he could scarcely believe that he had actually asked her. All that belonged to a dim and rather unnatural past. Somehow he felt that she had taken advantage of him in a weak moment, turned him into a husband and father much too fast. He loved Gam and Cherry, but they made him feel old, as if his days were numbered. ("Yeah. . . . . Don't tell me you're married. I don't go around with no married men. I don't think a refined girl should. . . . . I knew you wasn't that kind. . . . . You're just a big boy—wont never grow up. Yeah?")

As Clifford paced up and down his Oriental rug, Joyce regarded him tenderly. He was like Gam when he had nothing to play with.

"Joy, what's on tonight?"

"I've got a murder novel over on the table."

Clifford went over to the table, picked up the book, and ruffled the pages. Then he flung it down.

"Don't feel like reading."

"Want to go to the movies? We could make the second show."

He shrugged his shoulders.

"It's no fun going down there. The organ-player is something fierce. Besides, those old hens on the Board of Censors never let a good picture come to this woman's town. I'd like to be at a show in New York right this minute. Boy! Down in the front row, laughing my head off."

"If you had only thought of it in time, you could have gone as well as not."

"Hell, that's just the trouble! We never can go anywhere on the spur of the moment. We always have to think of things *in time*. That's the trouble with living in the suburbs. There's nothing here. We have to go out of here for everything."

"You know the doctor said Gam—"

"Yes, I know. I don't have to be reminded. . . . . Why don't you call up the Benjamins and have them in for bridge?"

"They're away."

"The Austins, then."

"They're down at the Country Club tonight. I saw Henrietta this afternoon."

"And the radio's out of order. Could anything more happen?"

"Let's go down to Behr's and have a soda."

"I don't dare. We owe him for five months."

"Oh, Clifford! I thought you paid him."

"Well, I didn't. I had to use the money for—something else. He doesn't need it. He's making money hand over fist."

Joyce looked up at her husband. She felt sorry for him. It must be an affliction to want things to do. Clifford was tall and thin and dark and spiritual-looking, so that strangers took him for an actor. He was like the pictures of Byron. She remembered how wonderful he had seemed the first time she saw him.

"I forgot to tell you," she said in a thoughtful tone. "I met Mrs. Ormsby the other day, and she said she thought you were the handsomest man in Brookstone." Joyce always felt a strange little squirming inside when she saw Clifford act too pleased over a compliment. She wished he would not lap up flattery—well, with his tongue so far out. But now, when she saw the look in his eyes, she could only wonder. It was a bright, rich look, as if

he were fed now. Clifford's cold humor melted.

"I tell you, Joy, I've always liked Mrs. Ormsby. Some people may say she's snooty, but I don't think so. She's a brave little woman. I've always thought her husband didn't come up to her. Inferior brute."

"They say he's drinking himself blind. . . . . Oh, I know what let's do. Let's play double Canfield."

"That's a good idea. Here, I'll put up the table."

They fixed the table. They drew up their chairs. They laid out their cards in rows of seven. It was so quiet in the living-room they could hear the clock ticking. . . . . Peace descended—peace such as the world gives.

Chapter Three

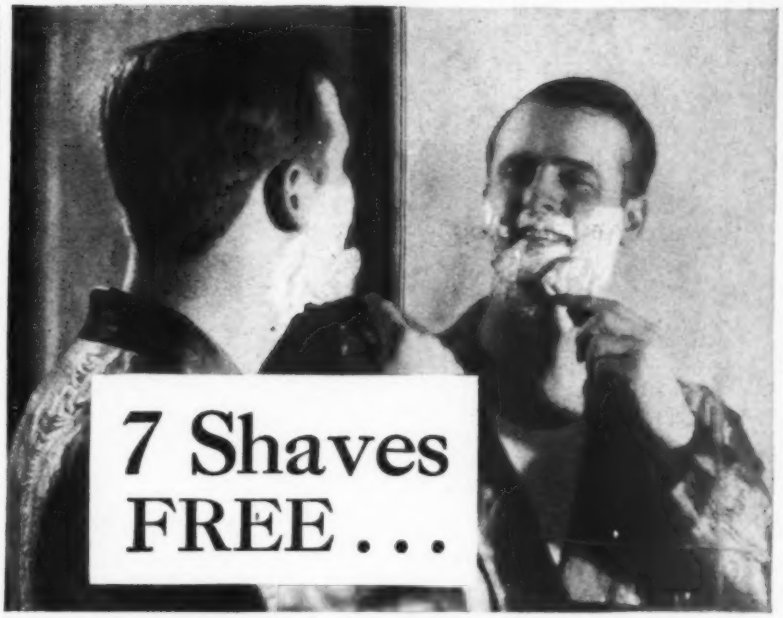
IN November, the earth is haunted. November is fey. Only a veil, thin as a leaf, trembles between the living and the dead. All the Past is an apparition, blowing through the mind. Memory has sheen and transparency never possessed at any other time of year. "I don't like the fall, somehow. D'you like the fall?" "This weather gives me the blues, dear!"

Ghosts do not walk in the summer, when the sensual body of the earth is clothed. Gray phantom vapor never drifts under the blossoms' pink and red. When the sun is hot over the gardens, when the boughs hang down with polished fruit, little human dreads and longings wait for fall. They wait and pass over the sky in November, like wild geese crying from the marshes. Well—one feels homesick—in November.

Brookstone heard the wild geese and the southward crying of other birds who felt this ground cold to their claws and this wind sharp in the tender hollow under their wings. The chittering swallows were gone from the church spire. The bowing robins had left the lawns. The gardens were withered, like hearts that have fallen out of love. There were asters, chilled and dried; there was hoar-frost on the paths. There stood the dahlias, the blackened grapevine, the doomed cockscomb and marigold. The barberries were blood on the hedges. The roses were shut away in straw. But the leaves did not mind, the flowers did not mind; and the birds could go south. It was only people that minded, that felt the sense of death in November.

Joyce woke one morning with that homesickness, that piercing sense of being a stranger here. ("But I live somewhere else, somewhere better than this!") She sat up in bed and took a good long breath to get over the foolishness. She shook her yellow cloud of hair. She stretched her arms up over her head and watched her wide green sleeves fall down past her elbows. So absurd to— Were those birds on the lawn? She threw back her warm quilt, slid her feet down to the mossy rug and padded over to the window.

Outside the window climbed wistaria. It covered the east wall. Summertime, it hung in purple icicles from the window ledge. But now it was dark with birds, a flock of blackbirds going south. The



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wall had come alive. There was something frightening to Joyce in their beady eyes—little shoe-buttons moving and moving. They hopped so violently, as if they meant harm, twitching their bills, clawing the dry bones of the vine. Light and shadow shuttled on the wall. It was uncanny.

When Joyce was taking her bath, she wondered if she were getting morbid. So many people, as soon as they have an unusual thought, believe they are getting morbid. Joyce laid her wet sponge on her knees and thought of how much sure-enough pleasure there was in the fall. There were the football games. Cold stadiums and hot whisky. Clifford and she were going to the Harvard-Yale game next week, because Clifford was a Harvard man. Clifford said it was jolly, and Joyce supposed a man would think so. But she always felt terribly old when everyone shouted—old and bored.

November? "Social life" had begun again. The Country Club Thespians had given their first play: "The Importance of Being Earnest." The Woman's Club was in swing. Die-hard golfers played with winter rules. All the bridge clubs had started. Families were settling down for the winter to learn contract. The school-children were being examined for adenoids. The doctors' offices were choked with people wanting to be inoculated. Screens down, furnaces on. . . . . Everyone was saying: "To think Christmas is only *six weeks away!* I simply can't feel the Christmas spirit yet." The markets were gilded with melons and dark with eggplant. Pale-blue turkeys hung by the legs. Outside the grocers' were barrels of walnuts and nigger-toes, sacks of bright almonds. The fruiterer wore scissors in his belt for cutting malagas. The golden fleece of chrysanthemums glowed in the florist's window—chrysanthemums and the first thick violets. Gardeners moved long rakes in the flame of bonfires. When the commuters reached home after dark, white smoke was fainting in their gutters. November? Why, the air was cider.

JOYCE had a horse-chestnut tree on her lawn. She remembered the time when all autumn seemed to be contained in one glossy horse chestnut, held in the hand. It should be still damp from the burr, with beautiful dark spirals in its brown, a real mahogany chestnut. She had used to think how rich a family must be who owned a full tree of such treasures. Now she had one of her own, and nobody gathered the brown fruit from the mouths of the green burrs. Cherry and Gam let them alone, for children were practical now. ("Silly Mamma, what *good* are they? You can't *do* anything with them.") But it always gave Joyce a turn to see the chestnuts rotting.

There was the impending animalism of Thanksgiving. When Joyce read the President's proclamation about people assembling in their various places of worship, it woke memories of herself, an undersized child, standing in a cold church while the congregation sang: "Come, Ye Thankful People, Come." After a far too heavy dinner, one took a slow walk with Aunt Emma and Uncle William, not feeling at all well. One met one's friends, also walking slowly, with boiled faces. The emotion of the day was not gratitude, but repletion. . . . . Joyce took her sponge off her knees. She moved her slender arms in the hot green water. She wondered if the cavemen had been afraid in the autumn, when they saw the leaves fall. They could not be sure there would be other leaves. Perhaps this—this melancholy was carried down from the cavemen. ("This weather gives me the blues, dear!") Perhaps it was only a migratory instinct of the heart, longing for another climate.

•

CLIFFORD was apt to be cross at breakfast, but Joyce understood him. Sometimes she wondered if it was possible to understand a man too well, so that he took advantage of it. Understanding a man usually amounted to letting him have his own way. But Joyce had always been quite earnest about Clifford. She wanted their marriage to be perfect, because she was proud. She did not want to be like the couples in the comic strips. Clifford and she were *different*. The terrible things that happened to other people did not happen to them.

Joyce was intelligent and armored against foolishness. Toward the rest of the world, she had her guard. But somehow when it came to Clifford she was soft. She loved him with the element in her that was ingenuous and simple. She had fallen in love with him when she was very young, and though she had grown wiser since in other things, her love for him had kept uncomplicated, as it was at first. He was her Achilles' heel. An arrow from any amateur could wound her there.

They breakfasted in a sunny room with white curtains and a jostle of crimson geraniums. In after-years Joyce remembered the tart smell of the geraniums, long after she had forgotten other things. She always remembered, too, the china bowl of oranges. Gam and Cherry, two pink peppermints of children, sat between their father and their mother. Gam had wet his hair so it lay like brass on his head. Cherry's short curls were forever falling in her eyes.

"What train will you be home on, Clifford?"

Joyce asked this customary question so she might tell Henry which train to meet. To her surprise, Clifford flung the morning paper down savagely on the table.

"I don't know, and I don't care! I wish you wouldn't ask me that every morning, Joyce. I get so *damned* tired! Every time I leave, it's *when will I get back*. Can't a man have a little freedom? After this, I'll get back when I get back."

"I just asked on account of Henry," Joyce said, looking into the top of the coffee-pot as she always did when she was embarrassed at breakfast.

Clifford reminded himself that he could not expect Joyce to understand.

"Oh, that's all right," he said easily. "I don't mean anything. But you're so contented, Joyce. You don't ever get fed up. You don't realize how—well—how stifling it is to always have your train decided. A man likes— Hell, what's the use? I'll be home on the six forty-five."

"I like change," Joyce said thoughtfully. "Only a train, more or less, doesn't seem important. I suppose you feel it's a symbol."

Joyce had an irritating habit of thinking aloud when she was puzzled. Clifford rose from the table to escape her slow, audible logic. He did not want to argue in front of the children, because he always forgot and swore. He simply couldn't argue without swearing. When he was putting on his overcoat Joyce came out into the hall. That was another thing—why did she *always* come out into the hall?

"I believe we have as much change as most people, Clifford. I don't believe life varies such a lot for anybody."

"Oh, forget it. Don't look so solemn. Can't a man make a general statement without your getting personal?"

Although Joyce never liked to admit it, there was always a feeling of tension snapped, when Clifford had gone. The breakfast-room seemed sunnier. The children began to talk, "Daddy's gone to business. Goody! Goody!" . . . . "Hush, Gam! Shame, Cherry! Daddy has gone to earn money so we may live in this beautiful house and have these nice clothes. Daddy works very hard."

AFTER breakfast Joyce went into the living-room. It was not pleasant in any living-room too early, before the maid had cleared up the litter of last evening's insignificance. There was the evening paper crumpled on the rug, the cards thrown down, the cold cigar. The room looked as if life had been wasted there. Nothing uncovered the wastes of life like a disemboweled newspaper, with all its events gone stale overnight. ("Did I spend time with that thing on the floor? Did I bend my eyes down close to those gray words? Was I interested?") Joyce put her foot on the face of a bride who had been married yesterday in St. Thomas' church. She went over and leaned her forehead against the mantelpiece and looked down into the empty fireplace.

She must do something for Clifford. His nerves were on edge. He had been working hard this fall, coming home on the late train, looking haggard. He said the office had been piling work on him, as if he was a truck-horse. (Clifford was a bond-house gigolo, used to impress lady clients. But neither he nor Joyce knew this. They thought he was a third vice-president.) What he needed was something to divert his mind, take it away from business. When he was home these days, he scarcely said a word. He seemed absent-minded, and often mumbled in his sleep.

Joyce went upstairs, and examined her pocketbook. She did not have as much money as usual; Clifford had been obliged to scant her allowance these past three months, because certain unprecedented bills had to be met. But there was enough to take them both to the theater. She would go in to New York and get theater tickets and surprise Clifford. That would be a change. Why, come to think of it, they hadn't been anywhere together in a long time! They had seemed to go more often when they were first married, before Clifford got so busy. She remembered the time they had taken the boat over to the Statue of Liberty and

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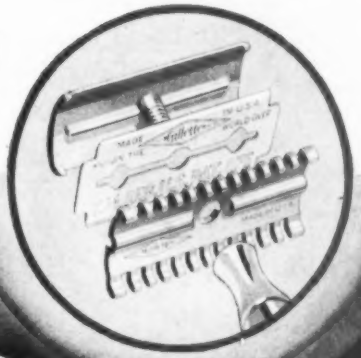
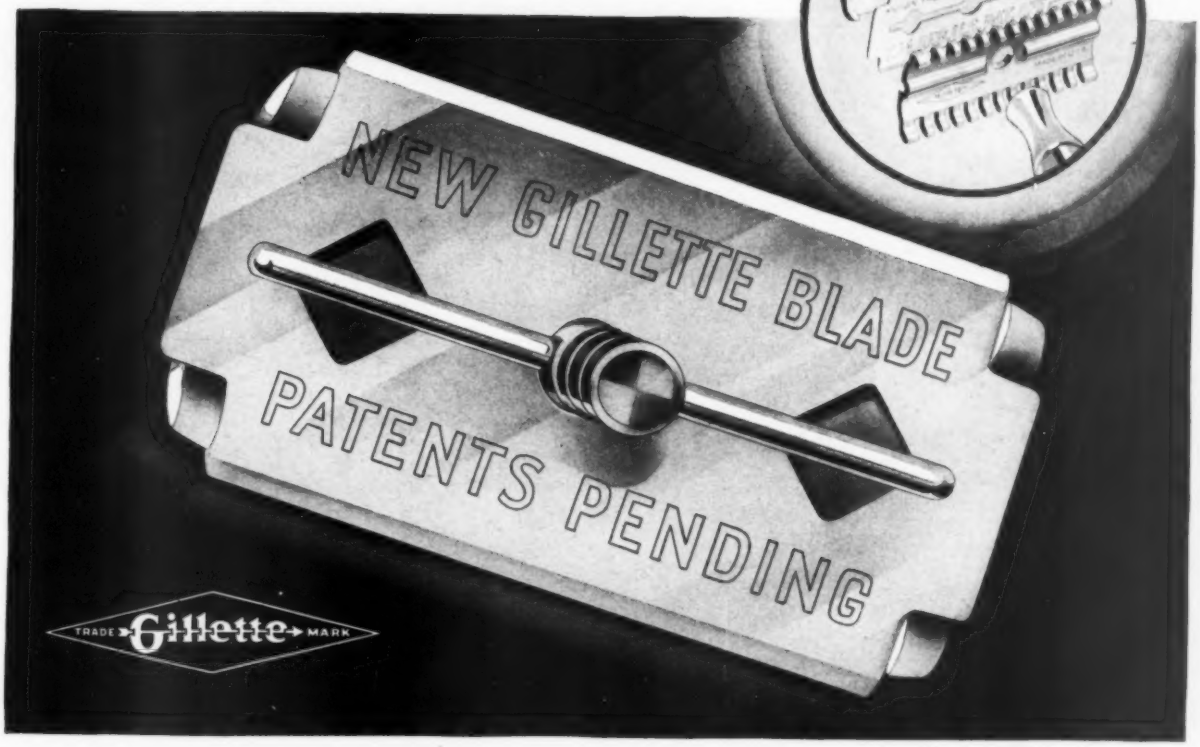
cut out "razor pull"





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climbed way up in the arm. How they had laughed—over nothing!

She telephoned to her husband at about half-past three.

"I've got a surprise for you. I'm in New York. Will you meet me at the Biltmore at six-thirty?"

"Uh-huh."

Something in his tone made Joyce wonder. It sounded as if Clifford were speaking through clenched teeth.

"You—don't need to meet me so early if it isn't convenient. Seven o'clock would be all right. Just as long as—"

"I'll meet you at six-thirty."

Click went his receiver. Joyce's cheeks burned, and it was a full moment before she opened the booth door. She had rather expected Clifford to be pleased. But when she was out in the street again, in the sensible air, she laughed at herself for being hurt. What could she expect—calling up Clifford in his office? He might have had men around his desk. What on earth did she expect? Clifford had often said that he could not bear a woman who pestered a man. But underneath, he was pleased. Of course he was.

Joyce felt light-hearted, now that she had assured herself she was foolish. There was all the time between now and half-past six to spend as she liked. She felt adventurous whenever she was in New York after four o'clock, because she usually took the three-forty back to the suburbs. That was the Brookstone shopping train. Consequently, to be in the city after four—well, it seemed silly to call it an adventure, but it was. First she went to the ten-cent store to buy toys for the children. She bought Gam a collapsible kite and Cherry a green wooden doll that was a music box. One turned a handle in its head, and it tinkled four notes—*sol-mi-do-la*—marvelous what one could get for ten cents!

SHE took a Fifth Avenue bus up as far as Grant's Tomb and back. She watched the daylight wither in the street, and the lamps bloom, like great gauze flowers. She felt happy, sitting with the toys in her lap (Clifford could put them in his overcoat pocket). She had that sense of leisure, brushed and combed, in the midst of other people's hurry. She was staying in for dinner-and-the-theater. In the suburbs, those words were always chanted. They meant a special something they could never mean to city dwellers. Premeditated for weeks—meeting in a lobby of a good hotel, a table d'hôte dinner somewhere else, a taxi if it rained. Broadway at night for the little woman—all in second-best clothes! They could never wear good evening clothes to the theater, on account of the trains. Their first emotion, after a play ended, was always: "Can we make the twelve?" All the enchantment was jolted away in a rush through the streets for the twelve. Some women said they never heard the final lines of plays because their husbands snatched them out, ahead of the crowd, to get the twelve. The evening surely ruined a twenty-dollar bill.

It was twenty-five minutes to seven when the bus stopped at Forty-fourth Street, the corner nearest to the Biltmore. Joyce would be five minutes late. She had not meant to be late, but she was rather glad. It would do Clifford good to wait. Joyce had heard women say that husbands should be kept anxious. ("Never let him feel too sure of you, my dear!") But it always seemed, when they met places, as if she was the one to be on time, and he was late. Suddenly she determined to be a little later. It would do him good. She stopped and looked in the window of a jewelry store. Very deliberately she chose her favorite watch, her favorite pin, her favorite ring. A clock in the window said it was twenty minutes to seven.

BUT when she went up the Biltmore stairs, Clifford was not in the alcove under the clock. She looked over the faces that stayed dead under her eyes, because they were not hers. A whole row of eyes not looking for her eyes. . . . She had not been late enough, after all. She had an impulse to go back to the jewelry-store window. But that was childish. Better stay here now. Clifford could not be long. He must have known she meant dinner-and-the-theater. He must realize they could not eat too late.

She sat down between a dark young man and an old lady in purple with a face-veil. Time passed. Everyone met everybody. A girl appeared for the dark young man, and he sprang violently from his seat. People came to life when their expected persons appeared. Some were terribly glad. Some did not care much. Some took each other's hands in that slow, ardent way. ("Is it really you, Elizabeth, after all these years?") Clifford had taught Joyce not to act too glad when she met him in public. It looked so unsophisticated, he said. Just a cool nod was so much better.

The hands of the clock moved in destiny to seven, to five minutes after. Joyce felt dizzy, watching those blazing spirals of revolving doors, scanning the men who came up the green velvet stairs. Sometimes the head of the stairs was the crest of a green cascade, with all the steps running down in rapids. On either side of the promenade were fountains of red flowers. She grew to hate those red flowers. She hated the faces that came and stared into the alcove and went away again. The orchestra was playing in the dining-room and it played too loudly. There is something about music played for other people. . . . . At ten minutes after seven, she thought: "We will have to hurry if we eat here. The show begins at eight-fifteen." At twenty minutes after, she thought: "I guess we'll have to eat somewhere else where they serve it quicker." At twenty-five minutes to eight: "Clifford must have worked overtime and had a sandwich in his office. We'll have to go straight to the theater. I'm not hungry."

Several times she looked into her pocketbook to be sure the tickets for "Daisy Fair" were safe. Eighth row center . . . . Yes, there they were.

AT a quarter to eight, Clifford came. There he was, drawing off his gloves. Joyce sat properly still while he looked into the alcove. His face did not light when he saw her. It darkened. Joyce felt the shadow. Well, she wasn't going to say anything about his being late. That was no way to begin a pleasant evening. He came and sat down beside her. He held his hat on his knee. And all the while the orchestra was playing. Rivers of music.

"I think we have just time to get to the theater. I've got tickets for 'Daisy Fair.' You've always wanted to see that."

His expression did not change. His face might have been lead.

"So you waited."

"Why, yes, of course I waited. I wanted—"

"You're just the kind of a woman that *would* wait."

Joyce knew that when Clifford was angry he called her a woman. When he was in good humor, he called her a girl. She lifted the ten-cent packages off her lap and held them up. They shook very slightly in her fingers. She felt as if she were holding them up to ward off a blow. *What was the matter now?*

"Look. I got these at the ten-cent store. Isn't it wonderful what you can get for ten cents? See, this one is a music box. You turn the handle. Will you put them in your overcoat pocket?"

He made no move to put them into his overcoat pocket.

"I hoped by the time I got here you would be gone. Why did you come to New York? Why didn't you stay home?"

Joyce's throat seemed to close. She could scarcely speak aloud. She found each word difficult.

"I thought—I thought—a little change would do you good. I—you've seemed so tired lately. I thought—a little change—dinner and the theater. I'm not being extravagant. It's my own money. Eighth row center. Wasn't I lucky to get eighth row center?"

Still that leaden face.

"Do you know why I've seemed tired?"

"You've been working hard."

"It isn't work. I'm tired—of you. I—I meant not to tell you, but your coming in tonight was the limit."

Joyce felt as if the world had exploded. The top of her head flapped. The room grew dark and circled. Then it cleared. She saw the red fountains, and the old lady, so very near, twitching at her veil.

"*Shhhhh,* Clifford! That old lady will hear you."

As usual Clifford grew louder on being cautioned. It kept him from losing his nerve. He was sick at his stomach.

"I don't care. Let her hear. I want this over with and understood. I don't love you, and I'm sick of pretending I do."

THEN Joyce went quiet. At the worst moment of all, she was steady. She thought to herself: "Now I must behave well. I mustn't cry." She was afraid of breaking down, here among strangers. It seemed more important than anything else that she should behave well. One must say the word "Good-by" as nicely as "Good-morning."

"How long—how long have you not loved me?" she asked, in a voice that sounded peculiar, but not loud.

"I never loved you."

Joyce's mind flashed back to the afternoon they had gone boating and gathered water-lilies—reached their arms down into the cold green water until their sleeves were wet. The lilies lay in a snaky heap

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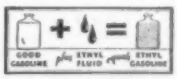

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in the bottom of the boat. The pond was dappled, simply dappled.

"Not even at the first? Not that summer?"

"I didn't know what love was."

Joyce remembered the night he had told her he would die if she did not marry him tomorrow. Oh, why couldn't he have left the past alone? Why did he have to smudge it now with his dirty hand?

"Why did you marry me, then?"

"Ask me another."

Like all people of larger reading than experience, Joyce was always being reminded of something she had read. When life bore down on her, she thought of something that happened in a book. Just now she recalled stories about women who won their husbands back by pretending they did not love them. It would be strategy now to tell Clifford she had never loved him either. But—that seemed servile. This was not a time for little, crawling tricks.

"I've always loved *you*," she said gravely. "I've been very happy. I've had seven beautiful years."

"I've made you happy," he said stiffly, "at a great cost to myself."

Clifford might have gone insane. Or did all men, at some time, prattle like this?

(This vivid drama of life today grows in power with each chapter. Be sure to read the next installment—in our forthcoming June issue.)

THE WANDERER'S WAY

(Continued from page 49)

"Listen!"

For quite a while they talked in whispers, the negress winding up:

"Wait. I shall speak to her."

"Tell her that Mehmet—"

"I know what to tell her. I know her, body and soul."

She left—returned a few minutes later.

"It is arranged," she reported.

Once more they conversed in whispers; and finally Murra's wrinkled, plum-colored features spread into a wide, toothless grin; the grin expanded into a laugh, high, shrill, triumphant; and she exclaimed:

"By Allah the Redeemer, fleas we shall put in a certain person's red, red beard."

THIS certain person was pacing the roof-top impatiently when, shortly afterward, Aminullah came back.

"Well?" he demanded.

"It took all your jewels," replied the Turkoman. "But—the matter seems propitious."

"You mean she—"

"Yes. Only—she wishes to make sure, quite sure, that she loves you. Here,"—he motioned the Afghan toward the parapet,—"show yourself! Show your handsome nose, your fine beard! For look,"—pointing,—"she is below!"

Indeed, on the adjoining roof, with Murra by her side, stood a slim small figure. This time her face was covered by a veil. Above its top seam her eyes stared up at Mehmet for several seconds. Then she spoke to Murra in an undertone.

The negress inclined her head.

"The Heaven-born," she announced, "wants to know where you live, O Afghan, so that tomorrow morning she may send for you in state—with full pomp and circumstance, as befits a man about to marry into the Grand Khan's family."

"I live at Saïd's coffee-house, in the Bazaar of the Bokharan Traders." Mehmet salaamed deeply. Then he leaned across the parapet, opening wide his arms. "*Wah*," he cried, "I shall wait eagerly, eagerly! *Wah, wah*, but you shall find my love strong—and I shall find yours sweet, O moon of the world!"

The woman gave a throaty, delighted laugh.

"Tomorrow, O hero!" came her low voice.

And she turned and walked down the steps, while Mehmet said to Aminullah:

"How can I ever thank you?"

"No thanks are needed. Are we not friends? And are we not both in love?"

"Oh—you too?"

"Yes—tremendously." The Turkoman filled a glass. "Shall we drain the bottle, and drink to your love—and mine?"

"By all means!"

They drained it, as well as a second. At last Mehmet went on his way, walking through the purple night, swaying a little from side to side, roaring a riotous song up at the moon's elfin miracle.

"Be quiet, O great and unmannerly buffalo!" came a sharp command as a red-turbaned policeman approached. "It is late, and decent people are in bed—decent people are sober."

Mehmet leered at him.

"Listen, my little cockerel!" he said. "Tomorrow — not a day later — I shall tweak your nose and otherwise disgrace you! For tomorrow, not a day later, I shall take to wife the Grand Khan's delightful niece!"

And he rolled down the street, and it was long past midnight when he reached Saïd's coffee-house, where his five companions had been waiting for him.

They met him with anxious questions:

"What kept you so long?"

"How much money did you get?"

"More than mere money!" His words, thickly alcoholic, tripped over each other. "The grandest price in the world I obtained for our jewels—aye, the grandest price in the world!"

And he dropped on his couch, and though they prodded him, demanded details, he was soon sound asleep—to waken, next morning, with a headache—to see before him the five rogues like vultures in a row, again to be assailed by eager queries:

"What have you done with our treasure?"

"Tell us, O creature!"

SO at last, there being nothing else to do, he told them the truth, that he had spent it all for the sake of a woman. And now here he was, cornered by the infuriated Tartars—drawing steel to defend himself, imploring them to grant him a chance to explain.

"Why," he cried, parrying the blade of Gur Mustaffa, the oldest of the five brothers, "this woman, she is of the great ones in the land. *Hai*, listen!"—sidestepping point and edge, doing a dance of death. "Riches and honors shall be mine—and I shall give you a fair share of both. . . . . Listen—"

But they would not listen.

"Murder and might!" shrieked Yar Mustaffa, the second brother.

"Let me at him!" begged the third brother.

"My privilege to slit his loathy gullet!" insisted the fourth.

"Mine to cut out his heart and feed it to dogs!" chimed in the fifth.

They went for him with hard clash and flash of iron; the merchants, who had come to the coffee-house for their morning meal, hurried out on the street, calling: "Police!" And Mehmet fought valiantly, swishing his sword in brave circles, bellowing vaingloriously that, by Allah, it was himself who liked long odds in love and strife—so come on, O sons of hyenas!

For a time he did well enough, lunging, thrusting, pinking a leg here, an arm there, since the Tartars' weapons interfered with each other. Still, death it would have been for him sooner or later, had not suddenly the door been flung wide open—and led by Murra, there entered a dozen soldiers armed with halberds and rhinoceros-hide whips, and servants who balanced great bundles on their heads.

She saw what was happening; and high rose her shout:

"Over there is my lady's lord! The one with the red beard! Save him!"

The soldiers rushed to the rescue. They disarmed the five rogues, herded them into a corner; and presently the latter cursed impotently as the servants undid their bundles and displayed a wealth of fine wearing apparel, and they saw the Afghan being dressed from head to toes in gorgeous silks, while Murra clapped her hands and exclaimed:

"Ah, the happy bridegroom! And my lady so eager to be your wife! She is waiting at the mosque. The Grand Khan has approved of the match. He knows your prowess as a robber—would rather use this prowess in his own service—"

"Thereby proving," Mehmet interrupted arrogantly, "that he is a man of sense."

And the five rogues cursed yet more violently as, a few moments later, they saw their former leader and treasurer cross the threshold, mount a richly caparisoned stallion, and ride down the street—the soldiers running alongside, plying their whips, yelling at the mob that lined the pavement:

"Give way, O Moslems! Give way, for Mehmet the Red!"

The mob obeyed. It splashed sidewise like a puddle beneath booted foot, the Afghan continuing his triumphant progress, bowing from the saddle, saluting the men with two fingers on forehead, mouth and heart—throwing kisses at the women, proud and happy—at last drawing rein, as he reached the great Mosque of the Seven Holy Innocents that lifted its somber beauty of horseshoe arch and minaret toward the pigeon-blue sky.

HE dismounted, entered.

The dimly lit interior was crowded with courtiers and captains of the Grand Khan's entourage. They salaamed to

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Mehmet. He salaamed back. Up the aisle he strode with something of a swagger—and saw, at the altar, a green-turbaned priest, Koran in hand, saw two women, both slight and small, saw a man.

Coming nearer, he recognized him: Aminullah, his friend—here, doubtless, to be his best man.

And the woman at his right? Zemzem!

How delicious she was! How soft and dainty! And soon to be his very own!

"God is great!" he murmured.

But who was this other woman, who was coming up to him eagerly, with outstretched hands?

He stared at her.

Her face! *Wah*—her face! Not unkindly, indeed pleasantly good-natured. But, he thought, how the angels must have laughed when Allah shaped it: the nose askew, the lips, the ears, the very chin askew.

She was now quite close to him.

"Welcome, O Mehmet!" she said. "Welcome, O strong man!"

He wondered: who might she be?

Then suddenly he told himself that he knew: Zemzem's mother, of course, his future mother-in-law. A woman most decidedly to be propitiated.

So he bowed courteously—and the next moment found himself clasped in a warm, cloyingly perfumed embrace, heard a passionate whisper:

"My Mehmet! My husband-to-be! I loved you even before I saw your handsome presence last night on Aminullah's roof-top! I loved you because of your boldness—"

"My—boldness?" stammered Mehmet.

"Yes, my modest, modest Mehmet! Did not Murra tell me how you saw me in the bazaar yesterday afternoon, when my veil slipped—fell in love with me, followed me to the palace, asked for my hand—audaciously, regardless of the fact that I am the Grand Khan's sister?"

The Grand Khan's sister! The word echoed in Mehmet's brain.

The Grand Khan, who had executioners galore and gallows to spare—who would not condone slight or insult offered his kin!

Thus for once Mehmet the Red was not Mehmet the Bold—was indeed Mehmet the Meek.

Meekly he bowed his head, standing hand in hand with the woman before the priest who made them man and wife.

THE new wife kissed Mehmet. "You love your Mabruka?" she asked.

"I adore you, O luscious sweetness!" came the Afghan's prompt if insincere reply, as again he remembered the Grand Khan's towering gallows.

She gave him a second, more lingering kiss.

"Now that we are happily married," she went on, "let us witness my daughter's wedding."

"To—to whom?"

"To Aminullah, your friend."

"Eh?"

"For months they have loved each other. But I would not permit the marriage. For this Aminullah,"—shaking her finger at the smiling Turkoman,—"ah, such a wastrel he was! I told him I would give him my Zemzem when he brought riches. Not because of the riches themselves,—I have wealth enough for all of us,—but because I wished him to prove his worth. And, the Lord be praised, he succeeded."

"How?" inquired Mehmet, half guessing the answer.

"Last night he came. He spread grand treasure at Zemzem's feet. Rubies—emeralds—pearls." Mabruka laughed. Then she turned to the priest: "Speak the blessed words, O holy one!"

SO once more there was the sonorous reciting of a *surah* from the Koran; and shortly afterward the two bridal couples left the mosque and were carried down the street in palanquins, followed by the wedding procession.

A long procession: Courtiers and captains, soldiers and slaves, young men waving tall poles decked with motley gay ribbons, young girls tossing green branches or strewing flowers, children sprinkling brides and bridegrooms with rose-water, Persian musicians bringing up the rear with a tremendous din of reed pipes and cymbals and drums.

Murra danced along. She raised her arms. She broke into a throaty:

"Yoo-yoo-yoo!"

"Yoo-yoo-yoo-yoo!" other voices took up the sound—Islam's eternal chant, in sorrow and joy, in sorrow at death, the end of life, in joy at the beginning of life, birth or marriage—

"Yoo-yoo-yoo!" shrilled Mabruka.

"Yoo-yoo-yoo!" boomed Mehmet the Red, with a certain self-irony, a certain self-pity, as the palanquins turned the corner, as he and his bride entered the palace, while Aminullah and Zemzem crossed the threshold of the house next door. . . . .

So here he was married—was married not for the first time nor—let us admit it, since the truth of it is known throughout High Tartary—for the last time.

But back of this marriage today was the specter of the Grand Khan's might, the Grand Khan's revenge, the Grand Khan's gray grim gallows—and Mehmet shuddered; and he looked at Mabruka with something akin to hate.

Then, queerly, suddenly, this hate disappeared like chaff in the meeting of winds.

Why, he thought, her face—so ugly, so wrinkled, so ludicrous! And yet, it *was* kindly. And kindly were her words—almost humble:

"You bring me great happiness, O my lord. I wish—Allah, how I wish I could give you back a tithe of it!"

He smiled. He kissed her. It was a very soft kiss. He lied like a gentleman:

"Never in all the world was there happiness greater than mine, O breaker of hearts!"

NOR can it be said that Mehmet was exactly unhappy during the weeks that followed. In fact, in a measure he was enjoying himself.

For years he had traveled the hard road, the savage, brazen road, with plenty forces of law and order hot-foot at his heel, seldom a decent roof over his head, and often nothing but the steppe or heather to sleep in during the burning of summer, and a camel's-hair cloak for only cover in the biting of bitter winter.

A creature of the woods and highways he had been—and now he was a man of grand wealth and fashion. Clapped into splendid clothes, he was, with handsome breeches of Bokharan satin full-pleated and cunningly embroidered, and hose of gossamer silk, and a voluminous turban that had cost fifty pieces of silver and whose fiery red matched his beard, and jeweled buttons on his tunic. And always a deal of money clanking in his waist-shawl, and the feeding high, while the work was to a proper man's fancy.

Indeed he did no work at all, except whistling to his Persian greyhound when he went for a stroll through the bazaars to buy himself the pick of whatever he wished, or, since he was now a captain in the Grand Khan's service, swapping yarns and boasts with the other tall captains, or belike going with the latter on a riotous drinking-bout and rolling home late and noisy—and Mabruka waiting for him, nor ever giving him the sharp tongue, but cooling his head with scented water and crooning:

"I love you, O my lord!"

Hayah, life was not bad. And, though this is a moot point, he might have spent the rest of his life in Mabruka's palace, had it not been for the five Tartar rogues.

He being what he was and they being what they were,—and for this you can blame them or praise them, just as you wish,—they had forgiven each other. The Tartars had forgiven that Mehmet had helped himself to their share of the loot. He had forgiven how earnestly they had endeavored to slit his throat—was expressing his forgiveness magnificently, with purses of gold, so that they too lived on the fat of the land.

BUT they were less content than the Afghan.

Always their fingers twitched and their nostrils quivered when, strolling through the bazaars, they saw rich wares profusely heaped—wares which, thanks to Mehmet's generosity, they might have purchased for cash, wares which they would rather have lifted by force or stealth. For that's what they were: robbers bloody and unashamed. Robbers, perhaps, less for the sake of the plunder itself than for the sake of the keen thrill of it—*hai*, the spying, the waiting in ambush, the wild riding and fighting, the life in the open!

"Ah," sighed Gur Mustaffa, the oldest brother, "are we not the poor caged ones that we must sleep on beds, and us aching for couches of spruce boughs?"

"That we must bargain with paunchy traders," agreed Yar Mustaffa, "and our blades ready to—"

"Look!" interrupted Daoud Mustaffa.

He pointed. The brothers looked.

They were sitting in the courtyard of their inn. A caravan was making ready for Persia. Camels squealed; horses neighed; men cursed. For a mule's kick had struck a box, had split it open; silver vessels rolled on the ground—and the brothers exchanged glances.

Bek Mustaffa, the youngest, walked over to the cameleers.

"Off through the Gate of Lions?" he asked casually.

"No. Through the Gate of the Seven Widows. We follow the southern trail."

Bek Mustaffa returned to his brothers. He told them what he had heard. Again they exchanged glances.

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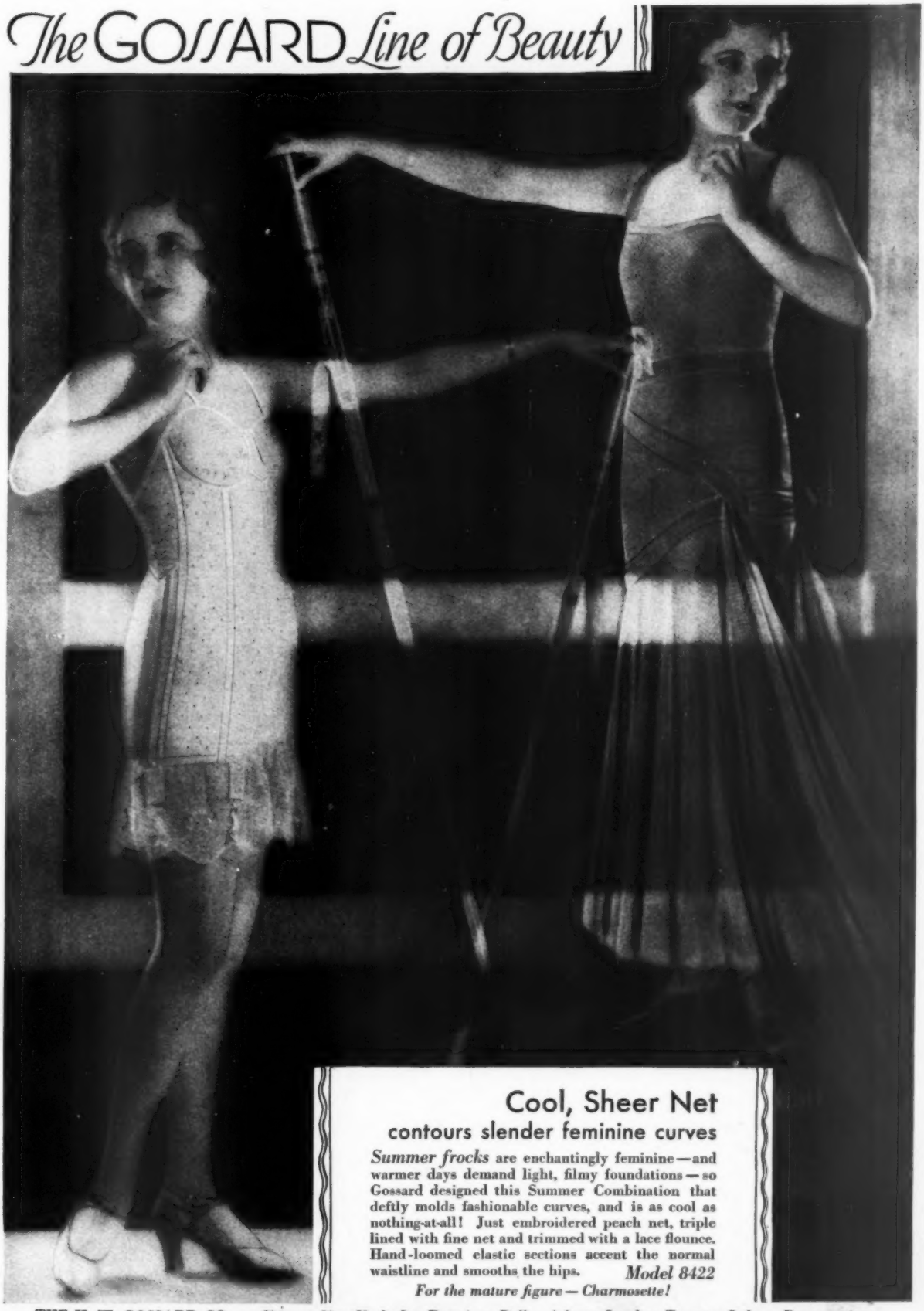

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"A fine night," suggested Gur Mustaffa presently.

"A fine night," echoed Yar Mustaffa, "for the open road."

Daoud Mustaffa coughed.

"Shall we—" he began.

"Why not?"

"Why not indeed?"

They turned toward the stable to saddle their horses.

"I shall be leader and treasurer," announced Gur Mustaffa. "For I am the oldest."

"You are," admitted Shem Mustaffa, the fourth brother. "Yet as to being treasurer—who but a fool leaves meat on trust with a jackal?"

"That is so," said Daoud Mustaffa. "Our Gur can steal food from between the lips, and the stomach none the wiser. *I* shall be leader and treasurer!"

"No! I."

"I!"

Their voices rose. Their eyes blazed. They were about to quarrel. Then suddenly they laughed, as the same thought flashed through the brains of all of them.

Gur Mustaffa put it into words:

"Mehmet the Red—we need him!"

"Nowhere his equal at smelling out loot—"

"At finding ambush—"

"At sword work—"

"Besides, I like him!"

"But—the last time he—"

"Hereafter we shall watch him closely."

"Aye! Our ten eyes against his two!"

"Come on!"

THEY left the caravanserai and went to the Afghan's residence; but they did not go to the front gate. For, and it was the only time she had shown her will, once Mabruka had seen the five rogues and had said to her husband:

"Drink with them if you will, meet them if you must—but not the like of them in my honest house!"

So now they went to the back entrance. They knew where Mehmet's bedroom was, and stopped below, calling to him with the crane's call, and the eagle's.

Mehmet heard. He knew what it meant. But he did not move. Mabruka was in the next room, with the door slightly ajar. She too heard. She did not know what the sounds meant. But somehow she wondered, worried, mumbled a prayer, as again, more clearly, came the crane's call and the eagle's.

Uneasily Mehmet stirred on his couch. He did not want to listen—and he pulled the bedclothes about his ears, while out on the street, since winter was already booming from the northern steppe with leaden clouds and the tang of snow, the five brothers shivered a little and spoke in undertones:

"He must be asleep."

"I shall wake him," said Daoud Mustaffa. Like a weasel he scurried up the outer wall. He stuck his head above the sill. "Hey!" he whispered sharply. "Hey—Mehmet!"

The latter sat up. Anxiously he glanced toward Mabruka's room. Nothing stirred there. He crept over to the window.

"What is it?" he asked.

"We want you! We need you!"

"No! Go away, O sons of polecats!"

"Come back to us!" pleaded the other.

"Ah, come back!" called Gur Mustaffa; and Yar Mustaffa chimed in: "A caravan starts tonight—"

"Be quiet!" replied Mehmet. "Do you wish to rouse the whole neighborhood?"

"But this caravan—silver it carries, perhaps gold—"

"Be quiet!" repeated the Afghan. "What have I to do with lawless deeds? Am I not now the silken, scented, proper gentleman?"

"Come back to us, O hero!" insisted Shem Mustaffa. "Remember the brave song of steel!"

Mehmet hesitated a little.

"Would it be daggers tonight, you think—or swords?" he demanded.

"Swords! Your own particular weapon! Our horses are saddled! Ride with us!"

The Afghan sighed. Then all at once he made up his mind.

"No!" he said. "Go you to your looting! My life is here! Begone! You cannot tempt me!"

And he shut the window; and Mabruka, in her room, stared into the dark.

"You cannot tempt me!" he had said; and yet—would he have argued at all unless temptation were already tickling his pelt? She wondered, worried—wondered, worried the next afternoon, when a slave related bazaar gossip; how a jeweler's caravan had been ambushed on the outskirts of Samarkand, and how later on a peasant had come upon the robbers violently quarreling over the division of the spoils. She looked at Mehmet, while the slave told the tale. She saw his fingers curling, his lips twitching. She was sorry for herself and—since she loved him so—for him; was still more sorry, a day or two later, as she heard the tail-end of a talk between Mehmet and Aminullah.

"Of what are you complaining?" the Turkoman was saying. "You have everything."

"Except freedom!"

There was a sob in Mehmet's voice, a sob in Mabruka's heart; and that night once more she heard the crane's call and the eagle's, and she snapped her fingers rapidly and touched her blue beads to ward off the wind of ill fortune, as she heard the brothers' whisperings.

FOR they too were speaking of freedom, mockingly:

"Hey—Mehmet! What does a blind man want—but his two eyes?"

"What does a dead man want — but life?"

He made no reply; and they called more loudly:

"Hey—Mehmet! Hey—red one! Do you not miss your freedom?"

"Tell us!"

But though he missed it—oh, so terribly, he would not admit it to the five rogues, the five tempters. He leaned from the window.

"Here in this grand palace is all I want!" he cried. "Here is comfort, and plenty, and every minute has its own happiness!"

"A rotten fig for your happiness!" jeered Gur Mustaffa. "*Wah* — think of other days! Think of the brooks mumbling through the purple deeps of the woods! Think of the horned, far moon sitting in the sky! Think of the wonderful ancient wilderness!"

"I am thinking of it all," was the Afghan's defiant answer, "and I am thinking, furthermore, that it is winter—that it is cold in the purple deeps of the woods, cold beneath the horned far moon, cold in the wonderful ancient wilderness. And my own life here is cozy and warm—and no better food nor stronger drink to be had in High Tartary."

"Nor woman more ugly!" laughed Shem Mustaffa.

"No woman," declared Mehmet stoutly, "with a finer, cleaner soul!"

"NO woman with a finer, cleaner soul!" The words echoed in Mabruka's brain. Curiously, they did not elate her; indeed they saddened her.

She would have rather heard him say: "No woman with a smaller, meaner soul! But—I love her!"

For by this time she knew that he had no love for her. He liked her, yes.

But—love?

She shrugged her shoulders resignedly. She was a Moslem, a fatalist. If the best it could not be, it must be the second best—his liking her. She cherished his liking. She hugged it to her breast like a priceless jewel. Perhaps, she thought, he would like her yet more if she told him:

"Go away—and good luck to you!"

But she could not do it.

"How selfish I am—may the Lord forgive me!" she thought.

So, now that winter roared through the streets of Samarkand full and hard, piling blue ice and silvered frost, bending the stripped trees like corn before the scythe, she remembered what Mehmet had said about his life here being warm and cozy. She surrounded him with every comfort and luxury. During the months that followed, there was always a great deal of baking and boiling going on in the big tiled kitchen. Merchants were busy lugging in huge kegs of Persian wine. Other merchants came, pushing and jostling each other, heaping costly rarities at the Afghan's feet, vociferously clamoring:

"Behold! A flawless emerald, carved in the shape of a Kashmiri parrot!"

"Behold! A pink tourmaline as big as my fist—its touch guaranteed to cure fever, dyspepsia, whitlows and the pains of a broken heart!"

"Behold! A length of brocade woven by the daughter of the Grand Mogul of Hindustan as a ransom for her father, captured in battle!"

"Buy!"

He bought. At least Mabruka did—for him.

She filled the palace with dancing-girls, with wandering bards and strolling players. On many an evening the rafters rang with cheer and laughter—and he said to her one day:

"I wish I could show you my gratitude."

"You can."

"How?"

"By being happy."

"I *am* happy!" He smiled, bowing deeply and kissing her.

INDEED it seemed that he was content —even when, occasionally, they were alone at night, when he would sit by her side, pleasant and companionable, telling her tales of his past life, his brave deeds,

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BEAUTY IS YOUTH. Or is it that Youth is Beauty? Anyway the solution of the chief Beauty Secret of the Aztecs is that they knew how to STAY YOUNG. And by the simplest, most inexpensive of methods. It's said they chewed gum! The same sort you have in Wrigley's. Chew Wrigley's with a certain regularity every day. It tones up the skin around the mouth to an alluringly lovely glow and emphasizes your youthful beauty of lips. A woman is only as young as her lips. Try Double Mint—it's peppermint flavored.

his reckless, lawless adventures: for instance how, in one night's scarlet encounter, he had sliced off the handsome pallid heads of seven Persian noblemen, and he alone and armed with nothing but a short dagger and they armed cap-à-pie from iron-bossed bucklers to curved scimitars; how he had stolen a lovely young girl from under the very nose of a great Maharajah in Delhi; how in far Stamboul he had battled so valiantly against the Christians, the unbelievers, that the Sultan of Turkey, the Commander of the Faithful, the Lion of Allah, had made him a Pasha, with a jeweled sword, seventeen Circassian slave-girls and a fine streaming of black horse-tails carried ahead of him on a silver wand in token of rank and dignity. . . . . And Mabruka would laugh and clap her hands and call him hero.

There was no sign or word from the five rogues. By sending a confidential slave who asked questions here and there, Mabruka found out that they had left Samarkand—and she praised Allah and the Prophet.

So winter roared on. Winter died. Spring came.

With the fresh moist green blown upon the trees it came, with the hedges bursting pink and white, with the wild geese flying north—and a restlessness in beast and man, an ever-growing restlessness in Mehmet the Red.

Mabruka watched him anxiously. He ate less. He drank little. When strolling players came to the house, or dancing girls or merchants with rich wares, he cursed them and sent them packing; and she knew what was going on in his heart, and again she said to herself:

"I cannot let him go! Ah, how selfish I am, may the Lord forgive me!"

Still his restlessness grew. Yet, impatient with all the world, he was never impatient with her, but would smile at her often, gently kiss her—and she wondered:

"Can it be—oh, can it be that he is beginning to love me?"

ONE night she was on the point of pushing open the door to his room, of asking him straight out: "Do you love me, the least little bit?" And she had already reached the threshold when suddenly she stood still.

For she heard voices drifting up from the street. The five rogues! They had returned, and were calling to her husband:

"Come with us!"

She listened tensely, heard him reply:

"Begone!"

"Come with us! Have you forgotten the keen way, the wanderer's way?"

"I have not. But—I cannot leave here."

"Why not?"

"Because,"—and his voice was very low, almost as if he were talking to himself,—"because there is one heart I cannot break!"

Then sharp laughter peaked up, mocking words: "Here! A present!" And looking around the edge of the door, she saw something thrown through the window.

Mehmet picked it up. It was a young eagle, its wings and claws and beak tied; and Mabruka understood the message, and so did Mehmet. He shrugged his shoulders. He put the bird on the window-sill. He removed its bonds. He watched it try its wings, then suddenly whir away into the night.

"Allah," he whispered to himself, "it is thus my way lies. But I—I cannot take it."

He turned as he heard a noise. Mabruka had come in.

"It is thus indeed your way lies," she told him, pointing at the bird which was cutting a thin black line across the moon's glitter. "Let the eagle show it to you!"

They stared at each other in silence.

At last he asked a question:

"You want me to go?"

"Yes. I want you to go. Ah,"—with a sob,—"do I not love you?"

They spoke no more. He kissed her. She kissed him. She ordered a slave to saddle his horse. She herself brought his sword, filled his purse with gold, his bags with food. She watched him mount, watched him gallop into the west.

Dry-eyed she watched him, proud, saying to herself:

"I am of the Tartar lords. I am the child of kings. I am ugly—yes, and I am old. But I am still and always of the Tartar lords. If black fate must happen to me, I cannot weep, nor complain."

And she stood there haughty, erect, while Mehmet crossed swiftly the streets of Samarkand, and at a short distance beyond the western gate joined the five rogues.

They rode on. The brothers laughed. They jested. They sang. But Mehmet was silent, his head sunk on his chest.

Gur Mustaffa noticed it.

"Hey," he cried, "what is the matter?"

Mehmet's answer was low:

"I am thinking—"

"Of loot?"

"No, of a woman."

"A woman whom you love?"

"No. A woman whom—almost—I loved! A woman whom, dear Allah, I can never, never forget!"

And then suddenly he spurred on his horse. He pointed straight ahead to where a caravan etched its snaky length along the horizon's rim.

"Come on!" he cried.

And he loosened his sword.

LET'S EAT

(Continued from page 79)

"I—I can't. I—I've got to be going. I've got an engagement," the girl stammered, looking like a thief; and in the warm air, she swayed a little weakly and dropped her bag.

The little old woman picked it up and thrust it back into her hand, but she scarcely noticed.

"Just the same, you ought to rest a little first," the little old woman said.

But Beth didn't hear her. She was clinging to the counter, frozen with fear. Over the heads of the jostling throng she had seen the anxious and determined face of the owner of the pocketbook, and beside him the immaculate perfection of a tall floorwalker. The cold inside of her crept out to the tips of her fingers, and her heart stopped. The people in the store became little black points very far away. Only the little old woman's kind eyes were real.

"Don't go away from me," Beth said. "Don't go away from me—don't go away."

The little old woman didn't answer. She was looking at the floorwalker. He touched Beth Watson—who for nineteen years had been good—on the shoulder.

"This gentleman," he said authoritatively, running her over with a cold blue eye, "has lost his pocketbook."

Something came out of the girl's stiff lips that she worked as though they didn't belong to her—something meaningless and incoherent. The owner of the pocketbook looked sorry for her.

"I don't say you took it, but you were certainly right there when it happened." And then to the floorwalker: "I'd been noticing her just a minute before, walking ahead of me; and then she fell behind, and a second later it was gone."

"Nonsense!" said the little old woman. "This girl's no pickpocket. Something's wrong with her. I don't know what it is, but it's not that. Here, look in her bag and go away."

The bag was gone from Beth's grasp before she knew it. The little old woman was holding it out to the floorwalker.

There was no deepening of the girl's feelings; there couldn't be. She stared rather stupidly while the floorwalker opened her hand-bag. She was still staring when he threw it down on the counter and said to the owner of the pocketbook:

"Well, I guess that's that."

She heard the little old woman say: "It is. There's nowhere *else* she could have put it!" Which was true: Beth stood there as sleek in her smoothly fitting one-piece gown, as pocketless and bulgeless, as a swallow. She wore no coat.

She heard the little old woman say that, and she saw the two men turn away, but her numbed brain didn't comprehend. All she could take in was that the shabby old gaping bag contained only three dimes, a handkerchief, a powder-and-rouge compact, and a lipstick with the top gone.

She picked up the bag and closed it. Slowly returning life began to creep through her veins.

"I've got the pocketbook, of course," the little old woman said. "The floorwalker will have the man's address, and I'll see it gets back to him. Are you hungry?"

"Y-e-s."

"Sold your coat, haven't you? Out of a job and no money?"

"Y-e-s."

"Hm! I thought so. Narrow squeak, wasn't it?"

"Y-e-s. Why—why did you do it?"

"Well, I've seen your sort before. First time, wasn't it?"

"Y-e-s."

"Never again, eh?"

"Oh, no, no, *no!*"

"M-hm," said the woman. "That's why I did it. And now, my child, let's eat."

"Who—who are you?" faltered the girl.

The little old woman smiled.

"I'm the store detective," she said; "but that floorwalker doesn't know it."

THE AMAZING SPREAD OF SLAVERY IN AMERICA

(Continued from page 89)

of the United States openly and bitterly attacked the builder. The latter, shy, sensitive but inspired, did the things now endorsed by our government. He let enemies attack him and took his punishment silently. His only recreation was the breeding and driving of trotting horses.

His two sons are successful capitalists and horsemen. They have conserved the fortunes willed to them. One of these sons spends part of his summers on a Western ranch, but devotes many months of each year to trotting horses. He sponsors the same half-mile track on which his father drove. The other son has gone in for polo ponies and running horses. Each is a topnotcher in his field of sports. Each, in his way, is his father's son. But each shoulders unending responsibilities.

To a large extent our men of wealth follow in their fathers' footsteps. They have increased the family fortunes but give more time to society and amusements than earlier generations, not so much to keep themselves occupied as to keep themselves fit. They find exercise and needed relaxation with horses.

FORTY or fifty years ago the heavy financiers of our population centers found most of their fun in driving harness horses. There were speed contests on the streets of Brooklyn, New York City, Cleveland, Chicago, Minneapolis and St. Paul and other cities. In winter the generals of finance drove their fast goers hitched to cutters. Their sons went in for motorcars. Now some of the sons of those sons are going in for airpianes. But the love for horses never dies.

More multi-millionaires are sponsoring racing stables and running tracks than ever before in our history. The trotting game is not neglected. One of the biggest baking-powder magnates owns one of the finest and largest stock-farms in the Blue Grass country of Kentucky, devoted exclusively to trotting horses. He has plenty of company.

Other millionaires are going in for fox-hunting. Hunt clubs for generations were confined to certain localities in New York, South Carolina, Pennsylvania, Maryland and Virginia. Now they are cropping up everywhere. A motor drive in almost any direction will reveal signs announcing: *"For sale—good acreage for hunting club."*

From the time we first had millionaires, the elect among our financial gentry invested heavily in sea-going yachts. Yachts were and still are, the acme of sport in money-spending. The World War put a damper on this sport. Pleasure craft were needed for more serious purposes. But in the past five years deep-sea yachting has come back again. One of our wealthiest financiers has recently given his two-million-dollar yacht to the Government—consideration one legal dollar. He is promptly building another one to cost much more than two million dollars.

Wherever a city boasts a deep-water front, multi-millionaires taxi from country places to business offices in palatial yachts or power-boats. If water transportation

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is not practicable, they taxi by air to landing-fields in planes that cost from five thousand to fifty thousand dollars. Some of them use this means of transportation not so much for pleasure as for time-saving. Time is important to a millionaire. In the fraction of a second he may lose or win a million dollars.

TIMES have changed the character of some amusements. Wives and daughters of rich men once bathed in full-length bathing costumes, stockings and all, at Bailey's Beach when Newport was the last word to the socially registered. But those bathing beauties were so fully dressed that swimming was a rarity. Now that little is left to the imagination, ten thousand men and women sit in the sun at Miami Beach while manikins parade in fetching apologies for bathing-suits, which are promptly adopted by lady bathers.

Palm Beach, Newport, Southampton, Lake Placid, Miami Beach and California are meccas for American men and women of fashion and wealth. Yet the time actually passed by each multi-millionaire in any of these playgrounds is limited. In yacht, airplane, limousine or private car, he dashes from the business of accumulating millions and takes a sun-bath, a dip, a sail, or ski-jump, rides after a fox of an early morning, shoots a few holes of golf, indulges in a chukker of polo, jogs around a half-mile track behind his favorite trotter—and before the dust has settled or the fox is cold, is trekking back home to see how many millions he has lost or won.

He finds his desk piled high with letters from people trying to separate him from his money. Civic operas, museums, foundations, asylums for orphans, cripples, aged and indigent, all call for help. And most of them get it liberally.

Of course a vast amount of money-spending or -giving by our myriads of millionaires is inspired by an ambition to avoid paying income-tax to our paternal government. Yet the glitter of gold may be deceiving. The multi-millionaires have their troubles.

Did you ever walk down Madison Avenue and see three detectives parading in front of an old brownstone mansion? They are not there for exercise. They are employed to forestall an unfriendly bombing or a robbery. The town house of a super-rich man is attractive to the gentry who believe in taking valuables where they find them. It is the same with country places.

Not long ago one of the finest estates in the vicinity of Boston entertained two night prowlers unaware. When the prowlers had departed, they took with them two hundred and fifty thousand dollars' worth of jewels. That is one thing poor people need not worry about. I go to sleep in my little country home without worrying about nocturnal visitors. I know that any expert in robbery will pass by my cottage for surrounding estates, where they have a chance to show a profit. Yet in one mail I have received six begging letters.

The appeal to rich people from charitable organizations is unending. Many of such drives are conducted on a percentage basis. The promoters keep twenty-five per cent of collections. They have the super-wealthy catalogued and ticketed. They know how much each multi-millionaire assays. It is a clever Midas who can take to cover and remain there effectively. Even a personal manager of charities does not always protect a wealthy man.

One gentleman who made a large fortune in chemicals engaged a hard-boiled sports-writer as a financial body-guard. The sports-writer's job was to keep donation-seekers at a decent distance from their victim. The sports-writer has strength, diplomacy, courage, resource and vitality, but just the other day he told me that he yearns for the peace and quiet of prizefight reporting. "The old man pays me a handsome salary," he confided, "but the leeches will get my goat some day."

Men of wealth are fair game for blackmailers. The higher the stake, the greater the daring. Shaking down multi-millionaires is regarded by crooks as legitimate.

One never knows whether a Belgian financier drops out of an airplane over the English channel because he is involved financially or for some non-financial reason. One may wonder why a genius at restoring street railways to prosperity, who controls banks, bus-lines and other industries, is found drowned at the bottom of a pond on his estate when all men know his private life is happy. In that particular case I am satisfied that death was due to accident, but I am not so sure that business success brought him content or happiness.

I talked this over with a street-car conductor. "The big boss rode my car the other night," said the veteran collector of dimes and nickels. "He asked how I was getting on. 'Fine,' I answered. 'Got a home paid for and healthy wife and kids. My stock in the Company is going up.' 'You've got the best of me,' the big boss said, as I rang the bell and let him off."

AMONG the friends in my own station is a proofreader on a daily paper. He gets his money every week, according to union scale and regulations. Yet he is always kicking about this or that, in spite of group insurance and other benefits, and the knowledge that, if worst comes to worst, a pension and a home await him.

I know the owner of that paper. He is worth four million dollars. He has earned it. He likes his game, but is always worried about costs and upkeep, strikes and lawsuits. Fourteen hours of daily labor is his minimum. He shaves with the morning paper propped up before him. Most of his surplus goes into benefactions. He has told me he would gladly change places with the proofreader. "But I can't let go," he admits sadly. "I am responsible to too many employees and stockholders."

What can a business man do with too much money? One of them becomes a chewing-gum magnate with a factory covering four city blocks and sales distribution throughout the world. As an escape from the thralldom of big business, he puts nearly a million in a skyscraper, invests thousands in a baseball team and buys an island in the Pacific. His greatest ambition is to avoid publicity, because he has become an international character.

Another magnate of my acquaintance gives a councilor of public relations twenty-five thousand dollars a year just to keep out of the papers, because of a naturally retiring disposition. Another, having become the world's richest man by building motorcars, tries to distract himself by collecting old equipages, fiddles and other Americana, but finds that such pursuits do not content him, and invests two hundred and fifty million dollars in a new car model.

One man begins life as a reporter, and at middle age is director of forty-five business institutions. To get his mind off business, he collects thousands of miniature elephants. A movie magnate spends one million five hundred thousand dollars on a motion picture. A fire destroys his studio. The master film is in a safe. He waits twenty-four hours before he knows that heat has not destroyed the film. A mechanic rises to the greatest heights in locomotive building. At seventy-three he starts to play. His chosen recreation is fishing in Florida. While fishing he wears an "iron hat" or derby. It is contrary to his lifelong custom to think of comfort. He has always been a two-fisted fighter. Possession of fifty million dollars does not change the man.

IN many cases there is a touch of pathos in the state of mind of "malefactors." Having arrived at some financial mountain-top, the rich man vaguely looks for beauty in the landscape. I recall the case of a rugged Irish immigrant who discovered the greatest gold- and silver-mine in history. After he had accumulated about thirty million dollars he transferred part of his energy to another field. In this, as in mining, he was tremendously successful; but he spent his Christmas evenings in San Francisco or New York alone. His family was having a good time in Europe.

These men who are born with driving power must keep on driving to the end. There is the eighty-six-year-old owner of steamship lines which girdle the globe profitably. He can't keep still. He must hustle for more foreign markets everywhere. He must have more cargoes in spite of his millions. Twelve hours a day is his self-made stint.

There is something wistful about most of these generals. They hope for happiness around some corner. Happiness, to them, means contentment; but contentment is not in their life's scheme. They must continue pioneering. Though their game is grueling, they devote themselves to advancing current civilization. And few of them really do the things they planned when they started after that first million.

These men who have too much real money are no more masters of their fate than the ditch-diggers who have just come to this country. A small minority get where they want to, but when they reach their desired destinations, they find their winnings are elusive, as witness one of our true financial kings who lost seventeen million dollars during two days of the October-November Wall Street panic by the shrinkage in value of his securities.

During a recent trip into the Northwest, I ran across a banking friend who has made a complete success of business life. He won his first million long ago. I envied him openly. "Here am I, once well off in business, but cursed with the yen to write," I complained. "Writing is poorly paid and precarious. I wish I had been sensible enough to stay in business."

He called me into his private office, pushed some buttons and summoned his vice-presidents. "Look upon this fool who doesn't know he is well off when he can make a living with a capital investment of one typewriter," he said to his assistant executives. "Was he responsible during the recent panic for five million dollars of deposits and for three million dollars in loans, and for hanging onto two million dollars of his own securities?"

"No," the vice-presidents yelled in chorus. "He doesn't know how soft life is for him!"

Then they cast me into the streets of their fair city. "You have no sense and are not entitled to sympathy," my old pal, the bank president, muttered threateningly.

That's what most rich men tell me in confidence. Then they add in so many words: "By good luck or bad luck, we are slaves to money; only professionals or wage-earners are free."

You may not agree with them; but that is the viewpoint of most moneyed men.

WOMEN AMERICA REMEMBERS—LOLA MONTEZ

(Continued from page 31)

governed dominions slightly exceeding the area of Cook County, invited her to visit him. Henry LXXII, however, objected to her walking across the palace flowerbeds, and signed an order for her expulsion after her temper had slipped its leash and she had told him what she thought of his tupp'ny-ha'p'ny country.

In no wise discomposed by this misadventure, Lola presented a bill for "expenses," collected the moneys she considered due her, and bought a ticket to Munich, where that royal art-lover Louis I, sanest of the mad Wittelsbachs, governed with a queer mingling of liberal and reactionary ideas. Not a bad king, Louis. As a lad he had defied Napoleon; as a grown man he had preferred the company of artists and thinkers; and on first coming to the throne he had given Bavaria a singularly enlightened rule. But now he was sixty-one, still kindly, prone to ingenuous enthusiasms, boyishly loyal to anyone who appealed to him; and partly because of his absorption in ambitious plans to rebuild his capital, he was quite under the thumbs of a group of ministers who were working with Metternich, the sinister prime minister of Austria, and the Jesuits, to undermine the spread of democratic ideas in Western Europe—their primary object the dismemberment of Switzerland.

Lola experienced no difficulty in meeting him; her beauty, sparkling vivacity and quick intelligence appealed to him with overmastering force. "I know not how—I am bewitched," he said two days later to one of his ministers. But the attraction was wholly mental and spiritual. And she bent all her energy to wean him from the reactionary clique who had dictated the national policies. The ministry were not loath to rally against her. In their minds she was a mere adventuress, to be bribed if she couldn't be overcome. Metternich, through the King's sister Caroline Augusta, Dowager Empress of

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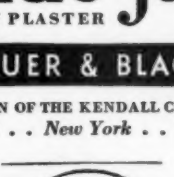

Austria, offered her ten thousand dollars a year to leave the kingdom. When that failed, the primate of Bavaria, the Prince Bishop of Breslau, remonstrated with the King, who answered him, according to court gossip: "Stick to your *stola*, Bishop, and leave me my Lola."

On December 15th, 1846, Louis reorganized his ministry so as to checkmate the activities of the reactionary group. The Clericals and their adversaries seethed with resentment, and the King responded with the announcement that he planned to naturalize Lola as a Bavarian subject, in order to make her eligible for certain dignities he intended to confer upon her. The ministry replied to him in a memorandum, inadvertently made public, in which they asserted: "The proposed naturalization of Señora Montez was openly characterized by Councilor von Maurer as the greatest calamity with which Bavaria could be afflicted. . . . . Bavaria believes itself to be governed by a foreign woman, whose reputation is branded in public opinion."

On the following February 16th, 1847, the King dismissed his ministry and constituted another cabinet, mainly composed of men Lola had approved. It was capable, liberal and included the first Lutheran to hold a portfolio. That evening the King came to her house in the Theresienstrasse to report what he had done. "I will not give Lola up," he told his friends. "I will never give up that noble, princely being. My kingdom for Lola!"

All Europe was agog. *Punch*, the English humorous weekly, cartooned her as the Spirit of Bavaria upholding a banner inscribed: "Freedom and the Cachuca." Metternich fulminated against her in every quarter he could reach. The Prussian Minister at Munich, Bernstorff, opposing the Austrian interest, reported favorably on her to his government. The French liberals made a heroine of her; Dumas chuckled over his wine at the Café de Paris, and told all who would listen to him: "*Hein*, a fast-stepper, our Lola; but watch out for her! She has the evil eye, that one—she'll bring bad luck to anyone whose destiny is linked with hers."

The Swiss sent word to her to cling fast to their interests; she was all that stood between the Confederacy and dissolution. Louis, on his part, showered titles upon her, and with them estates occupied by two thousand tenants, besides an annuity of twenty thousand florins. In taking this step he had the approval of the Crown Prince. More, the Queen, far from manifesting jealousy, sent word she would receive the favorite at Court. Lola, for once in her life, had enacted a great rôle unselfishly.

HER undoing came about through a baffling chain of circumstances. The advanced revolutionaries, who were working to achieve an international upheaval, exploited her by attacking her. The students of the University of Munich, mostly reactionary in sympathy, intrigued consistently against her; their detestation increased when she secured for the handful of liberal students the right to organize a separate corps, Alemannia. These lads of the Corps Alemannia became her bodyguard, and she wore their uniform. In anger, the students of the Corps Franconia, Bavaria, Isar and Suabia made a demonstration in front of her new palace in the Barerstrasse, January 31st, 1848. Lola, fiery as ever, rushed out into the street to face them, guarded by a handful of her faithful Alemannia, one of whom was stabbed in the fracas which ensued.

"Very well," Lola cried, "I will have your University closed." And she did. On February 9th, 1848, the King signed a decree ordering all students not residents of the city to leave within twenty-four hours. But she had gone too far. The closing of the University affected the bread-and-butter of the burghers. Two days later Munich was in insurrection, an insurrection in which both radicals and reactionaries joined for entirely opposite causes. Nobody realized it, but the dread Revolution of '48 which was to sweep Europe, had begun—and Lola had started it.

Louis, suddenly struck by the timidity of age, squirmed and fidgeted. Everyone was against Lola. His crown was in danger—everyone told him so. And with a cravenness of which he had previously given no indication, he signed an order for her deportation. Of all those who had courted her, four men stood faithful in her fall—Lieutenant Nussbaum, one of the King's adjutants, and three of the Alemannen, Peisner, Hertheim and Laibinger, who followed her into exile.

Not an inglorious exile, either. Switzerland received her with open arms, and the Cantons offered her an establishment for life. And her enemies had scant time to exult in their triumph. On February 24th Louis Philippe was compelled to abdicate as King of France. On March 2nd Munich flamed again in revolt, and the breath of revolution ran like wildfire across the Continent. All Germany was in arms, liberals joining with revolutionaries. Metternich was expelled from Austria. The Jesuits fled. On March 21st, poor, nerve-shaken King Louis was obliged to follow the example of his cousin of France. He had survived Lola less than six weeks.

But that was no satisfaction to her. After all, she had failed once more, and failed in the greatest opportunity which should ever come to her. She had money, to be sure, and titles; and she need never worry again about obtaining theatrical engagements, notwithstanding experience proved her to be as poor an actress as a dancer. But happiness continued to elude her. Once she married a young Englishman, and the English law denied the legality of the act. He left her, and she was alone again. She played and lectured in England, in America and Australia, restless, discontented, misunderstood. She went to California with the gold-seekers, and for a while thought she had found what she sought in a cabin high up in the Sierras; but a forest-fire burned her out.

She was glad when the end came, in New York, and she told the people who eased her last moments to forget that she was Lola Montez, Countess of Landsfeld, Baroness Rosenthal, Canoness of the Order of St. Theresa. She was plain Eliza Gilbert, a lowly penitent, who would plead with the first of the Magdalens to intercede for her with the Christ who towered above all earthly kings in her thoughts.

VILLAGE MAIDEN

(Continued from page 68)

get acquainted a little better, though I don't think that's so important. The only way we'll ever know how we'll hit it off, married, is to get married and see." He was silent an instant, while a car with undimmed headlights swept straight at them, swerved at the last second and was gone in a passing roar. "That the way you look at it?"

Paula nodded, against his shoulder.

"Well, say August or September. By that time I'll have a house built for you, furnished and all paid for, and there'll be some money in the bank. I'm not doing so badly; don't think I depend on promoting dances."

"Oh, do you promote dances?"

Sure he did, he said; he had promoted that evening's dance. Not for the money in it—he cleared only around twenty-five dollars, after paying expenses—but to liven things up some. "You cute little tike, didn't you even know I was running that dance?"

She murmured, a little surprised: "I don't even know your name. What is it?"

"I can answer that the first time," he said. "Charley Howard. And now that I think of— Cold?"

She said she wasn't, but he said her bare arm was like ice. He squirmed out of his coat, while the car crawled, and spread it over her. "This is the punk time of day," he said. "And you've got on only about half a yard of chiffon." An uncertainty was in the yellow light that the car thrust before it; the density of the night was gone, and the country was a landscape of gray shadows. "Now, baby," he said, his arm warm around her again, "what's your name?"

"Paula Blake," she told him; "my father's C. L. Blake."

"Gosh!" he said. His father was dead, and he supported his mother. He owned a half-interest in the Crystal Springs electric company, and was making a deal to buy out his partner. "The way electrical development is going, I figure I'll have a chance to sell out to one of the big companies, and then I figure I'll be kept on as manager, and work up. There's a big future in it. But it'll be a long day before I can support you in the way you're accustomed to."

She couldn't say a word to him about that girl, Leslie, who had been crying in the dressing-room.

"Oh, I don't know," she said. "I'm not accustomed to so much. I work in the bank." Suddenly she cuddled closer to him and said impulsively: "I could work in the electric company, if—if you needed anybody."

"Hell, and I can't stop the car!" Right behind them Margaret's rackety touring car was coming, derisively tooting, and there was no place to turn out. But he kissed her anyway, sketchily. "I can do better than that, with half a chance and both arms," he told her.

HE stepped on the gas, but Margaret's car hung at their rear all the way, and the dawn was coming in pale light and long shadows across the dewy fields. She could see him now, and every time she looked at that head, the rumpled brown

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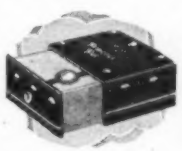

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hair, the pale forehead, the sensitive mouth, and that strong line from chin to ear, something happened, almost like a pain, in her chest. When he looked at her, something poured out of his ordinary hazel eyes that made her warm, shy, excited. They drove into the side yard, under the elms, and stopped at last. The house was quite still, and it seemed strange that Jimmy's kiddie-car was still on the porch. It was as though she had expected it to have been worn out long ago, and forgotten by a grown-up Jimmy.

He smiled down at her. "It's all set, then?"

"I guess—so."

"Give me a real kiss."

She did. "Kid," he said, huskily, "I—I'm crazy about you. Gosh, I—feel like busting out crying."

They both made an effort, then, to take this as though it were nothing extraordinary. They both spoke at once, stopped, laughed unsteadily. He said: "Want me to hang around till your folks are up, and give 'em the jolt?"

No, she said. No, she'd tell them. Didn't he have to be at his electric plant? He remembered then that he couldn't get away to come to Tracy again that week, on account of that deal with his partner, and the inventory. He'd telephone. "Well, so long."

"Same to you," she replied gayly. She didn't wait to watch the car speeding away, but went into the house, walking lightly as though she didn't care. . . . .

She did not say anything, even to her mother, until after telephoning her three times, he sent her the plans for the bungalow. Any changes she wanted, he said, he would put in. The plans were for a double bungalow, divided into two houses of five rooms and six, with separate entrances. He wrote her he figured they could rent the five-room one for enough to pay taxes, upkeep and interest on the whole investment. She thought it an excellent idea, and that evening when she came from the bank she remarked:

"Well, Mamma, I guess I'm going to get married."

HER mother was upset. She said she didn't want Paula to marry yet. Time enough, later. "You're only eighteen, honey; it's too young."

Her father raged. He said he wouldn't allow it; he said it was absurd, preposterous, ridiculous. What did the fellow mean? Who was he, anyhow? What did she know about him? What was the world coming to, when a baby like her would see a stranger once, and decide to marry him? No, he absolutely would not allow it; that was flat.

Margaret was thrilled. She came to the bank, and they talked about it for hours; they talked about it walking up the street in the summer evenings, and in Margaret's car, driving out the highway and back. Margaret wanted Bill, but Bill had not made up his mind yet, so there was not much to say about that. "You'll have to elope," Margaret said.

"No, I wont elope," Paula told her. "I think it's silly. Papa can't keep me from getting married, if I want to."

"He can keep you from getting married at home, though," Margaret said.

"How can he? If I just go ahead and invite people, and have the minister there and all, what can he do about it? I'm of age. And he wouldn't make a scene, in front of people. Men don't; they're ashamed to. They make an awful row at home, but not in public. They're awfully conventional that way, men are."

Paula did not say anything about that sobbing girl with the mascara on her cheeks. Charley came on Sunday, bringing an adorable Scottish terrier pup. "I thought you might as well get used to having him around," he said. He couldn't afford an engagement ring yet, but she didn't mind. She never wore rings on her slim brown hands. "They don't go with my type," she said.

Her mother liked him; and after a long talk with him, her father retreated into grumbling. It wasn't that they objected to Charley; it was just that they objected to her getting married. But of course, they couldn't help it, if she decided to do it. When she was with Charley, she knew she would. But after the third Sunday he spent with her in his car, she was very sober all day Monday, and that evening she ran out of the bank as Bill was stepping on the starter, and climbed into the coupé beside him. "Go out the creek road a little way, Bill, will you? I want to talk to you."

OUT on the creek road Bill parked the car under a willow, and they talked.

"You see, Bill, it's this way: Getting married means an awful lot to me. You don't know how I'd hate to make a fizzle of it. I think it's—well, sort of low, to be getting divorced all the time, the way people do. I'd think they'd have more pride. As far as I'm concerned, divorce is *out*. I'd stick till grim death, before I'd whine and be a quitter. You know how you'd feel."

Yes, Bill said, he knew.

"And yet, how can I tell? And—Bill, there isn't anybody to help me. Mamma's a darling, but she's all upset because I'm the only girl at home, and she keeps saying I'm so *young!* Papa, of course, is just plain jealous of our growing up; he's that way with all of us. He wants us to stay kids always, and it can't be done. And Anne says she's still crazy about Bob and would die if anything happened to the baby, but not to get married, whatever I do. She says marriage is a trap. Well, I don't think it's marriage; I think it's being in love that's a trap. And—I can't help that. Because—because, Bill, it's—got me." With a small, unconscious gesture her hand went to her breast, and suddenly her eyes glistened.

In sympathy, Bill looked away. He heard the little laugh under her breath, and knew that she was winking rapidly, biting her lip. She lifted her chin and shook her head. "Darn it, my cigarette's gone out!"

Bill lighted another one for her.

"And so, Bill, this is what I thought: I don't know much about him. If I'm not going to marry him, I'd like to know it right away. I'd rather quit now than later."

"Yes," Bill said, "I get that."

"If I get married, I'm going to stick. I'm going to have kids, and they've got to be taken care of; there's got to be two of us to do it. It isn't only money."

(The continuation of "Women America Remembers," appears on page 139)

She said in a hard voice: "Bill, will you look him up for me? Will you find out all about—everything?"

"I sure will," Bill said.

He could do that, because he was in the bank. He could talk to the bankers in Crystal Springs, and he could loaf around with the boys down there. And Bill wasn't like her father and mother; Bill would understand.

THAT night she drove up with a crowd to see the new talking picture in the city, and she quarreled with Harry. Glen Warner brought her home, and their kisses were few, and on her part absent-minded. She had been really interested in Glen, but all that seemed very far away now, and when he protested, she only said indifferently: "Well, you know I never was a petter." But she knew that was not what Glen complained of. Glen knew that something was, as he put it, eating her. She was all feverish inside, and everything she did and said seemed shadowy and unimportant.

She went to the bridge-club and played brilliantly and won first prize. She went to the golf course in Simmons' pasture, and hit one of Simmons' Jerseys with a long shot, and laughed hysterically, but forgot to tell the family about it at supper. She forgot to go to Mrs. Lafler's for her fitting, and had to wear an old dress to the picnic at Bryant's cave. Harry took her to the picnic; he was moody all day and drove like fury on the way home.

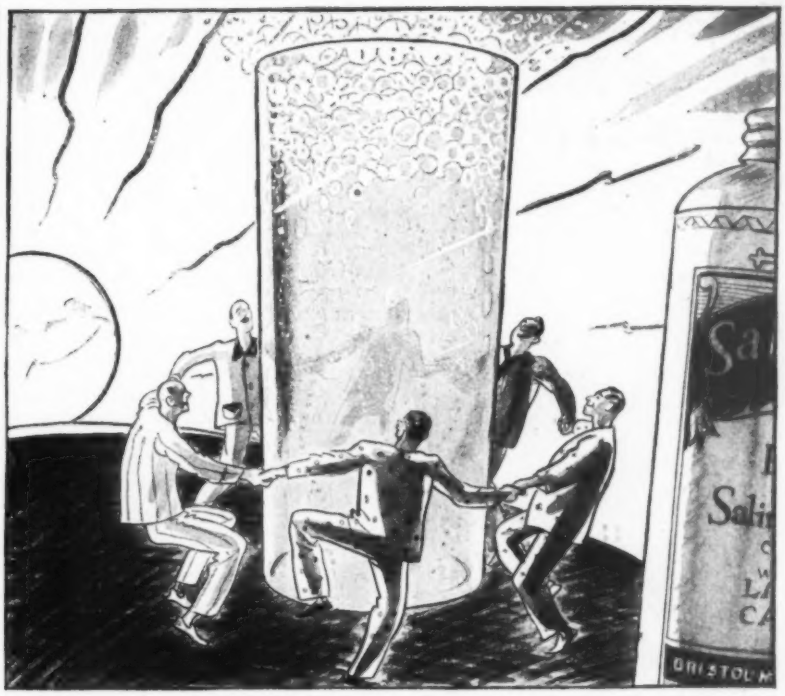
Next morning, before the family was up, Harry knocked at the door. Paula had just switched the current on the percolator. She went to the door in pajamas and dressing-gown, and was startled when she saw Harry. He wouldn't come in, and so she stood on the porch with him. It was a sweet morning; the syringas were sprinkling petals on the grass, and a robin was calling: *"Dearie? Dearie? Dearie?"*

"I guess you think it's funny," Harry said. "I've been sort of walking around all night." He stood doggedly in front of her, his hands in his pockets. "I made up my mind I'd tell you, and I don't care what you think of me for it. I don't want you to get mixed up with that Charley Howard. He's got no kind of a rep for the way he acts with girls." Harry's face wavered before her eyes, a brick-red face. "He strings 'em along, and drops 'em," Harry said.

Everything looked queer. She shook back her hair, and laughed: "Oh, be yourself, Harry! Nobody strings me along and drops me, if that's what you mean."

"Paula!" he said. Somehow he had her hand; he was holding it to his face, his hot, quivering face; she had a horror that he was going to cry. He choked: "You know I'm crazy about you. It's true what I said; but I'm jealous, is why I said it. It was a rotten thing to say. Kid, I—I can't stand it. Isn't there a chance—couldn't you—I know I'm only a date to you, but—"

She said clearly: "No, Harry. Not a chance." Suddenly big tears began to run down her cheeks. They ran down, and fell and rolled on her woolly dressing-gown, and soaked in. She held her head



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up straight, her wide eyes looking at him, and the tears kept rolling down.

Harry let her hand fall. He cleared his throat. "Don't, Paula—I mean—Don't give it a thought. You—you're the stuff, kid." He stood there a minute, then plunged down the steps. The robin still was singing: *"Dearie? Dearie?"*

BILL came back from Crystal Springs that night; it was the second time he had driven down there. Charley had called her every day on the telephone. He was coming next day, to take her down to spend the week-end with his mother. "And you're not going to stall any more on those plans for the bungalow," he'd said over the phone. "Get the old bean busy, kid. I'm asking bids on 'em next week, and if your kitchen sink's in the wrong place, it's you that'll do the suffering. How's that for the cave-man act, huh?" He had planned six rooms, because he felt as she did about having to have kids, to be really married; that other room would do for a nursery.

"Like to take a ride, sis?" Bill said when he came in about ten o'clock. Anne had driven over again to ask Mother's advice about the baby's colic; the doctor's medicine didn't seem to be doing much good. They were all sitting in the living-room, and they were surprised when Bill said that, but they saw that Paula knew what he meant.

As soon as they were out of town, Bill let the car idle along at twenty miles an hour. "I might as well give it to you straight," he said. "Financially, he's sound as a nut. They think he's the white-haired boy, in Crystal Springs. He'll be a big man before he's through. But he's tricky with the girls. I couldn't dig up any innocence betrayed or any of that rot. But he's the gay philanderer. He seems to be a regular bear-cat at it!" Even through his painful gravity something of wondering envy crept into Bill's voice.

"Don't take it too hard, sis," Bill said. "But maybe you'd better forget it. There's a girl named Leslie Gray; she's sobbing all over the place now. And before that—well, a long list of 'em. Getting engaged and getting out again seems to be his long suit. You know how it is; probably he's not so much to blame, at that. But it's an uncertain prospect, as a life job, even—"

"Even if I could land it, you mean? Don't worry about that. I can."

"Look here!" Bill protested. "I never said you couldn't, did I? The only question is whether—"

"Oh, shut *up!*" Paula cried.

The car idled along for twenty miles or so; then Bill turned it at a side-road, and they came back. Headlights of other cars were flashing along the roads, sweeping over the country at the turns, rising against the sky like the flare of conflagrations from the other side of hills. Sometimes when an oncoming glare changed to a roar going past, song floated for a moment on the wind of its passing.

"You're a darling, Bill; I mean you really are," Paula said, when the car stopped at home. She cuddled her cheek against his sleeve for an instant. Then she jumped out and ran into the house.

At seven o'clock next morning she was shaking his shoulder. "Get up, wake up, you old bum!" She rumpled his hair, while he blinked and yawned; then he sat up suddenly. Bright-eyed, rouged, with her perfectly painted mouth smiling, she stood dressed in her smartest sport-clothes—pleated skirt, tuck-in-blouse, gay sweater, jaunty hat. "Get up, honey; you're taking me to Crystal Springs."

"Golly," he said. "I thought I was going to the ball-game."

At half-past seven they set out. Her week-end bag was in the baggage-carrier; a note was left on the telephone. Papa and Uncle Jack could get along without them at the bank, she told Bill. "This is important."

"Well, but what are you going to do?"

"I don't know, silly! That's why it's important." She was gay—a hard, gay little person. She chattered and laughed; she sang. She said: "The sooner you get there, the sooner you'll get another cup of coffee. *'A cup of coffee, a sandwich, and you-ou-ou!'"* she sang. Just as they came into Crystal Springs, she said in a businesslike tone: "The first thing's to find out where Leslie Gray lives."

Bill was startled and uneasy. "Look here, now, don't you go starting anything!" But he inquired where Leslie Gray lived. There were street numbers in Crystal Springs. The number they looked for was in cement letters on one of the fat stone supports of a bungalow's porch railing. Spirea grew all around the porch, and a cement walk led up to it. "Now you can go get breakfast," Paula said. "Be back in twenty minutes, and look for me on the street-corner."

"I'll stay right here," Bill said grimly. He hunched down on his shoulders, and watched her slim legs and the sauciness of her short skirt, going up the cement walk. There was something almost piteously young about the backs of her knees.

PAULA pressed the door-bell firmly. In an eternity or two the door opened, and she said with composure: "Hello; you're Leslie Gray, aren't you? I'm Paula Blake. May I come in?" No one could blame Leslie for the mascara, she thought. Without it, her lashes had no character at all; they were even paler than the pale fluffy hair. Leslie was the kind of girl who didn't bother to put make-up on, at home. She wore a flowered dimity house-dress, with organdy ruffles. With her make-up on, she would have looked quite like a magazine cover. Her hands, offering cigarettes, were nervous and weak.

"No, thank you, I wont smoke," Paula said. She sat primly, her ankles crossed. It was a pleasant, ordinary living-room, with a Chinese-patterned rug and dotted net curtains. "I want to ask you," Paula said, "whether you were engaged to Charley Howard."

Leslie straightened in her chair. "What do you mean? What right have you got to ask me such a thing?"

"Well, I am thinking of marrying him myself."

"You—" Breathing rapidly, she stared at Paula. "Yes," she said sullenly, "I'm engaged to him."

"You are?"

"Yes, I am! I tell you I am, and I'd thank you—"

"Did he ask you to marry him?" Paula

insisted. "Did he say it? Did he say: 'Will you marry me?' Did he?"

Leslie sprang to her feet. She was so angry that tears stood in her eyes; her cheeks were red. "I wont tell you one thing about it! It's my business, what—"

"*Did he?*"

"Of course he did! He did! He did! Now does that satisfy you?"

"Yes, it does," Paula said, rising too. "I don't believe a word of it. You wouldn't say it three times, if it were true." Suddenly she advanced on Leslie. "And I'll tell you exactly what happened: You're one of these girls that take boys seriously when they mean nothing of the kind. Just because they pet you, you think you can marry them. Well, you can't. And you don't play fair, either; that's what I think! Petting's one thing, and marrying's another; and you ought to know it; and I don't blame them for getting sick to death of you, for mixing 'em up! I don't blame him one bit!" She stopped herself with a terrific effort. Her hands were shaking.

"I apologize," she said. She felt disgusted; Leslie was crying again. "But I don't feel as bad about you as I might, because you'll get over it. Good-by." Leslie didn't answer.

Paula's heels went *click-click* across the porch and down the walk to the car.

"It's all right," she said, getting in. She knew by Bill's eyes that she must look strange, and as the car rolled down that quiet, sunshiny street where sprinklers were whirling on lawns, she examined her reflection anxiously in the mirrored lid of her vanity-case. It would be wearing, she thought, to be married to Charley, but you didn't get anything worth while without paying for it.

"You see," she explained to Bill, "he didn't lie to me. That's the only thing that matters; and he didn't, really, Bill. I don't think he will, ever, except the usual little lies that aren't important. I suppose women will always be hanging around him, but— He really is pretty crazy about me."

She smiled shyly, sidewise, under her lashes at him, and Bill's heart swelled into his throat. "I don't blame him," Bill said. "You're a great little kid, sis."

"Well," she said, "I like him, and I'm going to keep him!"

CHARLEY'S mother was surprised to see her; Charley was on his way to Tracy for her. But that didn't matter, Paula said comfortably, because he would be back. His mother said, what she thought, that it was nice to be alone together, to get acquainted and talk over things. Paula was sure she would like living in Crystal Springs, and it was so near her mother that she could run in often, as Anne and Mary did.

"I can't cook at all," she confessed; "but I can learn." His mother was sweet, and took her right into the kitchen to help, when it was time to start lunch.

"I want just a little home wedding," said Paula, peeling potatoes—carefully making the peels thin. "But I do want a veil, and orange blossoms, and everything. I think this getting married by a justice of the peace, in ordinary clothes, as though a wedding wasn't anything important, is all wet. Don't you?"

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THE MURDERS ON THE SHIP

(Continued from page 85)

Mr. Wright went the whole hog. "With gestures."

It was a little confusing. "Singing, Mr. Wright, with gestures?"

"Yes sir. You see, I don't get many chances to sing right out loud. I haven't got what anybody would call a real good voice, and when I let it out, it's usually in the vestibule of a train, say, where there's a lot of other noises, or maybe in the woods some place, or like last night on the corner of the deck where there wasn't anybody it would bother."

Valcour smiled sympathetically. "And these gestures, Mr. Wright?"

"Well, now, sir—I suppose I was waving my arms around some, and maybe this feller thought I might be about to turn around when he came and pulled my cap down. I thought he did it to make me quit singing."

"Didn't you make a grab for him, or anything, Mr. Wright?"

"I guess I was about to when Miss Sidderby, here, screamed. It was kind of upsetting. Come to think of it, I did catch hold of something, though."

"Yes, Mr. Wright?"

"It must have been a piece of paper. I sort of remember it tearing. The feller who pulled my cap down must have had it in his hand, and I caught hold of it."

Valcour's spine felt like ice. "Where is this piece of paper, Mr. Wright?"

"I guess maybe it went overboard, sir."

"Don't you know? This is very important, Mr. Wright."

"Well—as I just said, Miss Sidderby screamed about then, and I was trying to yank that cap up from over my eyes, and I guess I just naturally chucked that piece of paper overboard. Maybe it just fell on the deck. I have an idea this feller stooped for something before he beat it, because his arm or shoulder, or something, hit my knee."

"Is that the suit you were wearing last night, Mr. Wright?"

"Yes sir."

"Do you mind feeling in its pockets? You might have shoved that piece of paper into one of them without realizing it."

Mr. Wright obligingly stood up and searched. "It isn't in any of them, Mr. Valcour." He sat down again. "I guess I must have just chucked it right out of my hand right after I'd grabbed it."

"WHY so interested in the paper, my dear Valcour? Could it be, by any chance, one of the ubiquitous fatal ones?"

Valcour smiled pleasantly. "The trivial details, Mr. Dumarque, usually form the basis for the successful detection of a crime. The criminal, you see, even if he is only normally clever, can generally guard against the main ones. One case that I was on—and it was an exhaustive and expensive investigation that covered a period of six months—was solved by a six-inch strip of cheap calico that had been bought in a Newark department store, and which I found a child playing with near an ash heap. —Tell me, Mr. Wright, how long you had been standing at the rail before Miss Sidderby screamed."

"Well, now, really, Mr. Valcour, I couldn't say."

"Did you go there right after supper?"

"No, I guess I kind of wandered around for a while."

"Where?"

"Just all around."

"Alone?"

"No sir, not all of the time. I was up on the bridge for a while talking with Mr. Swithers. I guess I must have stayed there with him until he went off watch."

"That would be eight o'clock, then."

"So it would."

"Where did you go from the bridge, Mr. Wright?"

"I went down to my cabin to get me a cigar, sir."

"You share a cabin with Mr. Force, don't you?"

"Yes, that's right."

"Was Mr. Force in the cabin, when you got the cigar?"

"No, nobody was in the cabin, sir. I just fussed around there awhile and then went on upstairs again. I guess I walked up and down on the lower deck a bit, and then I guess I went up here to this deck and over to that corner, sir, as I said."

"Which side of this deck did you walk along, Mr. Wright, to get to that corner?"

"The—the side you call the body side, sir."

"Then you must have passed the door and ports to the wireless-room."

"Yes sir."

"Anyone standing there, Mr. Wright?"

Mr. Wright's eyes bulged a little. "Well, now, there was, Mr. Valcour."

"Who?"

"Mr. Sanford was standing there, if I remember correctly. He was kind of looking in through one of the ports."

"BUT surely—but surely—but surely—" And Mr. Sanford, like a phonograph needle stuck in a groove, could get no farther.

"I'm sure that it is quite all right, Mr. Sanford," Valcour said. "We will come to it in a moment. There is one thing I would like cleared up before we go on. You said, Mr. Wright, that your impression was that the man who pulled your cap down stooped to get something before running off. Which direction, would you say, he ran in?"

"Now, really I don't know, Mr. Valcour."

"You could hear his footsteps, surely?"

"No sir—there wasn't a sound of a footstep, and by the time I'd gotten the cap off my eyes, he was gone, and I heard that shriek, and I guess I just started running and bumped into Mr. Dumarque, here, like he said."

"How about it, Mr. Dumarque? Did you notice anyone at all—standing still, perhaps, close to the wall—before you hit Mr. Wright?"

"No one, my dear Valcour. I am positive."

"And you, Miss Sidderby—you noticed no one passing you on the starboard deck?"

"Oh, no, Mr. Valcour. Until Captain Sohme and the rest of you came, there was no one with us at all—with that poor dear young Mr. Gans and me. I think it seemed forever before all of you came."

"In that case," Valcour said, "as our man didn't go to either side, he must have gone up."

"Up?" Captain Sohme was shocked into vague visions of ascensions.

"Up the ladder to the bridge, Captain."

"Then the third mate must have seen him, Valcour."

"I doubt it, Captain. Miss Sidderby had screamed, you see, and the third mate would have been drawn, by the scream, to the starboard end of the bridge. The helmsman would also, almost certainly, have been looking in that direction. The man could have stayed just at the head of the ladder and then come down again, after Mr. Dumarque had passed. He probably followed Mr. Wright aft along the deck."

Mr. Wright's brow grew moist. "Thank God I didn't know it!" he said.

"Did you keep right on running, Mr. Wright?"

"I just ran right on around the deck, Mr. Valcour, until I came up with the bunch by the body. Of course lots of people were running by that time."

VALCOUR smiled. "Then the only thing we can convict you of, so far, is singing. —How about you, Mr. Force?"

"I haven't any definite recollection of what I was doing. I'm sure it wasn't anything special. There's nothing much you really can do on board a ship, except loafing, is there?"

"Perhaps it will be easier to work backward, Mr. Force. Where were you when Miss Sidderby screamed?"

Young Force didn't answer right away, and his face had grown pale and set-looking. After a while he said: "I was standing at the top of the ladder leading to the port side of the bridge, Mr. Valcour."

Mrs. Sanford, who had been fingering a metal ash-tray, dropped it. Its sound, when it struck the table, was a minor explosion, and Mr. Sanford said: "Oh, but for God's sake, Sue—"

"I see." Valcour stared thoughtfully at young Force and then smiled. "Unless it was you who killed Mr. Gans, we must alter our premise."

"Yes, Mr. Valcour."

"If the man who pulled Mr. Wright's cap down had run up the ladder, you would have seen him."

"Yes, Mr. Valcour."

"But you didn't see him."

"But I did, Mr. Valcour."

"You saw the murderer?" Miss Sidderby's voice was a whisper.

"I didn't say that, Miss Sidderby. I said that I saw the man who must have pulled Mr. Wright's cap down."

"Did you see him actually pull it, Mr. Force?"

Young Force smiled nervously. "Why, you know I couldn't have, Mr. Valcour. The bridge extends right across the forward end of the boat-deck. I couldn't see Mr. Wright at all."

"What did you see?"

"I think that I must have heard something first, something that made me step to the head of the ladder and look down,

because I don't think I'd have turned, otherwise." Young Force's smile was still nervous. "It couldn't have been Mr. Wright's singing, because he had stopped singing. Maybe it was because he had stopped singing. Does it matter?"

"Everything matters, Mr. Force."

"Well, the man must have made some noise, then, when he pulled the cap down over Mr. Wright's eyes, because I did stop and look down, and there was this man running along the deck toward the stern."

"Who was it, Mr. Force?"

"I couldn't say, Mr. Valcour. It was dark down on the deck, and this man was running pretty fast. You know how vague things are on a dark night."

"Was there nothing familiar about the figure at all, Mr. Force?"

Young Force thought this over for a minute. "This isn't the sort of thing you ought to speculate about, Mr. Valcour. I'd rather not say, if you don't mind."

"Just as you prefer."

"It isn't as if I'd seen his face."

"What was it you did see, which makes you think you might identify this man?"

"I don't mind telling you that. It's different, having you draw your own conclusions. What I saw was the end of a white scarf, Mr. Valcour."

"Like the one that Mr. Sanford wears, Mr. Force?"

"Just the end of a white scarf, Mr. Valcour," Force repeated.

MR. SANFORD's twittering approached a paroxysm. "I insist—I insist on being permitted to speak!" he was trying to say; and Mrs. Sanford, with two round baleful eyes fastened upon young Force, was saying, "You are a wicked, wicked man!" and Mr. Dumarque, with his eyes also turned toward young Force, was saying: "Thank God I've some company at last, old chap!"

"I've never been so maligned in my life!"—Mr. Sanford, having gathered enough steam, was drowning them out. "I can prove—*prove*, I tell you, that I wasn't within miles of the spot at all—miles, sir—miles!"

"Then you must be a fish," Mr. Stickney was saying.

"Gentlemen!" Valcour's voice was a snuffer. "We will stick, if you please, to one thing at a time. Before taking up the question of that white scarf, I would like to know, Mr. Force, what you were doing on the bridge."

"I had just reached it, Mr. Valcour. I was going to spend a while with the third officer, talking—smoking a cigarette or two."

"Was it just coincidental that you went up to the bridge at the moment you did?"

"Just coincidental, Mr. Valcour." Young Force's face was strained. "Things can be coincidental—even suspicious things—don't you think so, Mr. Valcour?"

"Certainly. I don't know just what the average is, but life is filled with coincidences, with ones that sometimes seem almost incredible. Did Miss Sidderby scream before or after you had seen this man, Mr. Force?"

"Just after I had seen him."

"What did you do?"

"I went right down on deck again."

"Did the scream seem to come from the starboard side of the boat, to you?"

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"Yes. I knew it came from the starboard side of the boat."

"Then why didn't you run across the bridge and use the starboard ladder, Mr. Force?"

"I don't know."

"Your action was just impulsive?"

"Just impulsive, Mr. Valcour. Why do people save telephone-books and things like that when there's a fire?"

"I'm not questioning your veracity, Mr. Force. I'm just trying to get the picture as complete as possible. Why haven't you spoken about this running man until now, Mr. Force?"

"Why, you said yourself that the thing was pretty serious."

"Well?"

"I didn't feel like incriminating anybody, Mr. Valcour—just because I had seen a white scarf."

"And that's all?"

"That's all, Mr. Valcour."

"I tell you, sir,"—Mr. Sanford's voice amounted to a shriek,—"it was not my white scarf!"

"What was it, then, Mr. Sanford?" Valcour said.

"What was it, sir? How should I know?"

"Then let us wait until we come to it, Mr. Sanford. Did you see the collision between Mr. Wright and Mr. Dumarque, Mr. Force?"

"No, I didn't, Mr. Valcour."

"Why not?"

"Because I ran forward and went around to the starboard side of the deck. Mr. Wright had run aft of the ladder."

"I see. Then you just joined the crowd around the body."

"Yes, Mr. Valcour."

"All right. —Now, Mr. Sanford, what about it?"

"Oh, but my dear sir, surely you don't believe those dreadful accusations?"

"There haven't been any accusations, Mr. Sanford."

"But I insist, I insist that there have been, sir! Mr. Wright has me peering into the wireless-room portholes, and that poor deluded young man over there has me flying about from the murder in my scarf. Really, I've never been so traduced —so vilified—"

"Pull yourself together, Horace, and stop making a fool of yourself."

"No, really, Sue, really—"

"Just take things a little more calmly, Mr. Sanford. Nobody's trying to vilify you. Mr. Wright has stated that at some time around eight-thirty he saw you looking in through one of the wireless-room ports. Were you?"

"Oh, but of course I was; and I'm sure there's nothing criminal in doing that. Wireless has always fascinated me, sir—positively fascinated me. When you consider the magic of communicating words and sound through thousands and thousands—"

"Horace!"

"Really, Sue! I should have gone into the wireless-room and inspected the set, with Mr. Gans' permission, had I not seen through the port that he was otherwise occupied with Mr. Swithers. And that, my dear Mr. Valcour, is the answer to that."

"Then from eight-thirty to nine?"

"Ah, there—there you have me. As I explained this morning, my dear sir—my —that is to say, my little spells."

"At a minute or two after nine Mr. Stickney states that you were in the smoking-saloon with him for, perhaps, five minutes. Is that correct?"

"Oh, quite correct, quite, quite correct. I was endeavoring to recover from the little spell."

"We've reached the really important part now, Mr. Sanford—from nine to nine-thirty. You weren't suffering from a spell then, were you?"

"Indeed, oh, indeed not, sir. I passed that, as you say, critical period up in the bows chatting with a most competent witness, which will be adequate proof that I was *not* dashing away from a murder on the boat-deck in my white scarf."

"Who is this witness, Mr. Sanford?"

"It is Mr. Poole, sir—young Mr. Ted Poole."

"Dear God alive, man, he is dead!" Captain Sohme's voice boomed through the saloon; and Mr. Sanford's horselike features became the color of gray chalk.

"I had forgotten," he said, "that Mr. Poole was dead."

Chapter Twenty

Lat. 35° 12′ north
Long. 64° 29′ west

THE sound of eight bells, muffled by the drizzle and very distant, drifted through the open ports. No one but Valcour looked directly at Mr. Sanford.

"That's all right, Mr. Sanford," Valcour said. "This is just an informal inquiry, you know. We're simply trying to get the picture straight. Miss Ella Sidderby, I know, can't help us, as she played bridge with Captain Sohme, Mrs. Poole, and myself from supper on. But you, Miss Sidderby—have you anything that might be pertinent to add up to the moment when you found Mr. Gans?"

"Oh, I'm certain there was nothing, Mr. Valcour." Miss Sidderby's little face was pale from shock, at the agonizing thought that sitting there, so near her, just across that little table from her, might be (with his face like a horse) the shameful murderer of poor dead thin Mr. Gans. Her hands were like leaves waiting for some wind to make them tremble.

"Where did you spend the evening, Miss Sidderby?" Valcour was very gentle.

"I visited with Mrs. Sanford"—the name was a flame that burned her tongue —"in her cabin, Mr. Valcour. I don't remember exactly what we talked about —just ordinary subjects such as people talk about when they're off on a holiday. That's all we are, you see, Mr. Valcour." The wind was coming, and her hands, which were ice-cold leaves, were yielding to it. "We're just a little group of people who ought to be happy, because all of us, I'm sure, are just on a little holiday." Her smile was a tragic failure. "I just stood for a while, Mr. Valcour, on the main deck after leaving Mrs. Sanford, and then I walked up onto the boat deck." Her voice was so very queer that she wondered whether anybody could understand her. "And then I found Mr. Gans."

"Thank you, Miss Sidderby. We wont have to ask you anything else. Perhaps if you went with your sister to your cabin

and rested for a while until supper?" Ella was lifting her from the chair, and her body was shaking, shaking, shaking, and Mr. Valcour was saying to Ella, "If there is anything we can do to help, Miss Sidderby?" and Mrs. Sanford was standing too, and drifting after her like a soft thick cloud; and somebody (it couldn't be herself) was screaming: "Don't let her come, Ella—don't let her come!" . . . . "No, no, darling—she sha'n't, I promise you she sha'n't." And Ella was turning just when they went through the door and saying, with a bitter hard little laugh such as she'd never heard her use before: "Our holiday?"

"Damn it, Valcour, but surely we are through here? That little woman, she has had me crying." Captain Sohme, who cried whenever and wherever he felt like it, took a handkerchief from his pocket and blew his nose soundly.

Valcour said nothing for a moment. He was staring at Mrs. Sanford, who was sitting in her chair again. He did not like the color of her skin. There seemed to be no blood beneath it at all.

"Well, Mr. Valcour," she said, "is there nothing that you care to ask me?"

"Did you stay in your cabin, Mrs. Sanford, after Miss Sidderby had left it?"

"Yes, Mr. Valcour. I stayed there until people started running past my door, and I followed them upstairs."

"Then there's nothing to ask, Mrs. Sanford."

She stood up heavily. Her body was heavy, and everything about her looked very old.

"It may seem funny to you," she said, as she walked with feet that were weights to the door, "but I'm on a holiday too."

Chapter Twenty-one

Lat. 35° 12′ north
Long. 64° 30′ west

TELEGRAM from Commissioner of the New York Police Department to government radio station at Cape Hatteras:

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"I THINK we should put that Sanford man in irons at once," said Sohme.

"On what grounds, Captain?" asked Valcour. They sat in Captain Sohme's cabin, waiting for the arrival of Mr. Swithers, who was completing his search for the stolen gold.

Captain Sohme, who had almost reached the point where he had to have somebody in irons or burst, was indifferent to grounds. "Because I do not believe a word he said; and guilt, Valcour, was written all over his face."

"There is no evidence against him at all, Captain. Take my advice and go easy for a while longer. This business is com-

(Continued on page 151)

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Photo by Underwood & Underwood

"Of course I'm not forgetting the views"..... Grand Porcelain Tower of the Imperial Summer Palace.

Favorite Places of Famous People

Heywood Broun chooses China

I'D like to live in China, and specifically Peking. Possibly the old place has changed since I went there just eighteen years ago. My stay was only three weeks long, but it was the most enjoyable trip I ever took. To be sure, all the circumstances were just right: I had a job which required about one hour's work a day. All play makes Jack a dull boy, and this job was precisely arduous enough to make me feel a useful citizen and still leave leisure for recreation. And it didn't tire me out, because the work could be done any time during the day or night.

Most of my friends were young officers in the Marine Corps, and they introduced me to some wealthy Chinese merchants who were just in process of learning to play stud poker.

Bret Harte to the contrary, the Chinese has no natural genius for this game. At the end of two weeks I seriously thought of resigning my job and settling down in Peking; but just then some sort of uprising came along, and the Marines and the merchants didn't have so much time to play.

Photo by Price Studios

Heywood Broun

Yet my love for Peking is by no means based wholly on material things. Everybody knows, or is beginning to realize, that the Chinese are the greatest cooks in the world. Their cuisine combines the imaginative quality of the French and the solid substantiality of the German. The climate of Peking, back in 1912 when it was not unpatriotic for an American to use alcoholic liquors, was precisely suited to Scotch whisky, which was cheap and abundant.

And of course I'm not forgetting the views from the top of the wall which ran around the Legation Quarter. Peking had no prohibitions and no curfew that I ever heard of. It was a good city by day and an even better one by night. In fact, unless some change has occurred, it must still be cuddled up quite close to Utopia, for it was the only capital I ever visited in which everybody minded his own business.

(Continued from page 149)

ing to a head. I can feel it as definitely as a man who is rheumatic can feel the approach of a storm. I do not refer to a personal menace to any individual, but to a sense of danger to this ship itself and to every person on her."

"But what could you mean, Valcour? This ship is well found; she is young for the age of ships; I have never found her anything but sturdy and dependable. I have taken her through two gales, and although I do not believe we have any slant of fair weather ahead of us, there is nothing to indicate any cause for alarm. For another day, possibly two, we shall have overcast skies—some drizzle, some mist—disagreeable, maybe, but safe as a millpond. We are pursuing our course steadily. What do you mean, Valcour?"

"Why was that wheel lashed, Captain?"

"Did we not decide it was because this thief would want the time to rob the safe?"

"That isn't the reason."

A bit of biscuit, which Captain Sohme had been absently munching, ended up on his bunk. "Then what is?"

"We can do nothing but wait."

"We can go mad while we are doing that. —Come in!"

CAPTAIN SOHME knew from his first look at young Swithers' face, as Swithers came inside and closed the door, that there was no gold. It was not the sort of face that comes bearing tidings of refound gold.

"Nothing doing, Captain," young Swithers said.

"Gott!"

"We carried the search into each department, Captain, as well as the passengers' quarters and the decks."

"Yes, yes, Mr. Swithers. I am sure that you did your best."

Young Swithers laughed nervously. "Chips was robbed, too."

"The carpenter?" Valcour said sharply.

"Yes sir. He had a lump of sailmaker's wax stolen from him."

"When?"

"Guess it must have been sometime this morning, Mr. Valcour." Young Swithers' fine eyes clouded slightly. "He remembers leaving it in Gans' cabin after he finished sewing the canvas. He remembers leaving it right on the wash-basin, and when he went back to get it this afternoon, it was gone. Some theft, Mr. Valcour!"

"Gentlemen, let us not bother with trifles!" Captain Sohme, goldless, was getting shooting pains in his head.

"We must bother with trifles, Captain," said Valcour. "If we don't, there's nothing left to bother with at all. Mr. Gans' cabin was unlocked all day, Mr. Swithers?"

"There isn't any lock on it, sir. There's just a bolt on the inside of the door."

"Then anybody could have gone into it?"

"Yes, Mr. Valcour, anybody."

"And stolen," Valcour said reflectively, "a lump of sailmaker's wax."

"Shall we keep on with the search, Captain? We've looked in about every place there is."

"Why not defer it for a while?" Valcour said.

Captain Sohme's head was splitting, and

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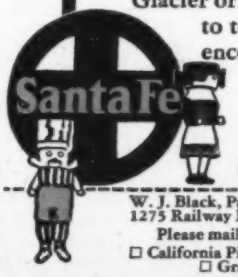

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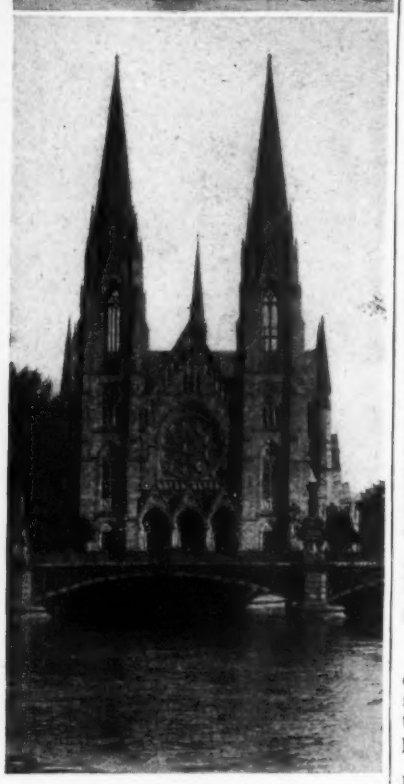

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the important immediate question, beyond either lost gold or anything else, was whether to take two or three tablets of aspirin. "Yes, yes, Valcour, for the present we will defer it. That will be all, thank you, Mr. Swithers."

"Yes, Captain."

THE door closed behind young Swithers, and Captain Sohme got heavily up from his chair. "My head hurts me like the devil, Valcour," he said. "I am going to take three pills of aspirin at the least." He walked over to the locker and opened its door. "No, Valcour, I do not feel so good— Dear God in heaven, man, but here it is!" Gold coins slipped from his plunging fingers to the floor. "Valcour! *Valcour!*" His relief sent great laughter booming through the little room. Valcour was beside him, picking up the ten- and twenty-dollar gold-pieces that had dropped to the floor, and adding them to the little mound piled carelessly on the locker's shelf. "Call back Swithers, will you, please, Valcour, and we will tell him that no longer need there be any search. Quick, Valcour! I am as happy and as excited as a child."

Valcour stood quite still for a moment. He stared at the loose little heap of gold. "I'm going to ask you to say nothing about this for a while, Captain."

"But why, Valcour, why?"

"Because I still want a leverage and an ostensible reason that will permit me personally to search the passengers' cabins tonight. Will you forgive me for not expanding?"

"Just as you wish, Valcour." Now that he had the ship's money again, Captain Sohme felt a tolerant and immeasurable relief. He opened the safe door and started transferring the gold in large handfuls. "I shall count it later and see that it is all there. Why, Valcour, should anyone be such a fool as to do this crazy thing? It is beyond reason."

"Nothing, Captain, that has occurred on this trip is beyond reason. What was that gold in?"

"In?"

"Yes—it wasn't left lying loose in the safe, was it?"

"No. There should be a sack, a small canvas sack—"

"Is there?"

"Why, no, Valcour—you are right, that sack is gone." Gold dazzled his eyes again. "Does it matter?"

Valcour's voice was very quiet. "Yes," he said. "I think it matters."

Chapter Twenty-two

Lat. 35° 14′ north
Long. 65° 30′ west

NO stars or moonlight filtered through the humid murk, and the sea was an enigmatic glass that broke with delicate crashes before the ship's sharp pressing stem. One shaded lamp was the only cabin light Mrs. Poole had turned on, and she sat, beyond its radius, dressed in black.

She had sent her maid from the cabin at Valcour's request. They were alone in it; and Ted's young body was sheeted on the lower bunk as far up as his chin; and his profile, carved from cold hard wax, and colorless, was nothing human.

"He doesn't look the same at all," she said. She could think of no reason for it —this emptiness. Just a little while ago she had been filled with him; each moment of day and night her heart, her mind, her body had been filled with him. She stared at well-carved wax and felt empty. "It's because he isn't moving," she observed.

"You don't mind talking about him, Mrs. Poole?"

She looked at him queerly. "No, Mr. Valcour," she said, and added: "I wish that I did."

"Then will you tell me, please, whether Mr. Poole said anything to you last night as to how he spent the evening?"

"Why, no—how did he?"

"Mr. Sanford has stated that he talked with him for quite a while up by the bows. Mr. Poole said nothing about it?"

"I don't believe so. I don't think it would have struck him as anything important, do you? We naturally talked for quite a while about Mr. Gans, but I don't think we talked about anything else."

"I dislike bothering you at such a moment, but have you that copy of the will which Captain Sohme brought you this afternoon?"

"It's there, Mr. Valcour—that paper on the rack above the basin. I had intended having it buried with Ted. My ideas, for a while, were rather hysterical, Mr. Valcour."

"You have changed your mind, Mrs. Poole?"

"I think it seems a little absurd, don't you? Gestures like that, hysterical gestures, should be spontaneous and acted upon immediately. They seem stupid if you don't do them right away, and think about them." Her lovely agate eyes returned to carved wax. "That isn't Ted," she said.

"What are you going to do with the will, Mrs. Poole?"

"It's useless, isn't it? If you'll give it to me, please, I'll tear it up."

"Certainly, Mrs. Poole."

Valcour stood up and went over to the washstand. He took the will and gave it to Mrs. Poole. The rip of paper was loud in the quiet room. "It was too bad to have bothered you about it, Mr. Valcour," she said. "Do you mind throwing these out of that porthole?"

He took the scraps of paper from her, and they were momentarily white against black windless reaches of murky night. He felt incensed at her hardness, as he always felt whenever he encountered strange hardnesses in human behavior. He could never quite get over being a little astonished about it. He went back to the chair and sat down again.

"I understand, Mrs. Poole, from a remark you made last night, that there is a will on file in your lawyer's office. I am correct in supposing that now that this will is torn up, the one in New York is again effective?"

"I see no reason why it shouldn't be."

"When was it drawn, Mrs. Poole?"

"Quite awhile ago."

"How many years, about?"

"About ten or so, Mr. Valcour. There has been no occasion to alter it since then —until this—"

"Do you remember what its provisions were, Mrs. Poole?"

"Perfectly. I'm leaving the estate to my family. I haven't the slightest idea who half of them are. I've nothing closer than a third or fourth cousin or two whom I know about. That will be entirely up to the executors, wont it, Mr. Valcour?"

"Are there no personal or specific bequests that you remember?" Valcour was saying.

Her eyelids contracted a little. "There are, Mr. Valcour." She tried hard to restrain her impatience; it was alone that she wanted to be, to close this chapter headed *Ted*. "The only large one is a bequest for Toody."

"Would either Toody or her aunt have any way of finding out about this bequest, Mrs. Poole?"

"I think—I remember them saying something years ago about the aunt having called at the office one day—yes, that was it, Mr. Valcour. The aunt wanted to know whether any definite provision had been made for Toody in case anything were to happen to me."

"But surely, Mrs. Poole, the lawyers would not advise her as to the contents of your will?"

"I don't believe they did. On the other hand, I had given them very explicit instructions that I didn't want to be bothered any more about the matter, and they told me they were afraid the aunt would force herself on me—make a scene, I believe they called it. At any rate they simply reassured the woman that Toody was taken care of. I think they even went so far as to say handsomely. But I'm certain they weren't specific." If that curtain were not drawn instantly across the bunk, she intended to scream. "Would you think it rude of me, Mr. Valcour, if I suggested that we continue this in the morning?"

VALCOUR stood up, and there was a queer, speculative look in his eyes. "I don't think we need touch upon the subject again," he said. He went to the door. "I hope that you will get some rest tonight, Mrs. Poole. You look tired."

Her smile was molded steel. Old—old—old—not tired, she wanted to yell it at him loudly. . . . . "Thank you, Mr. Valcour," she said.

"Good night, Mrs. Poole."

"Good night, Mr. Valcour."

He went outside and closed the door. He beckoned to Anna Wickstod, who was leaning passively against the wall of the passage. She moved with deliberate steps to him and stopped.

"Yes sir?"

"You are spending the night with Mrs. Poole?"

"Yes sir."

"Are you afraid of a gun?"

"No sir. In the country where I come from we have guns."

"Then take this."

Valcour took a small flat automatic from his pocket and gave it to her. She held it in the palm of her hand and stared at it with stolid curiosity.

"You know how it works?" he asked.

"Yes sir," she answered. "This is the safety catch."

"There is no need for alarming Mrs. Poole. Have you a place to keep it?"

Anna Wickstod turned her back. She stooped and raised her dress, and an elas-

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tic snapped distinctly in the silence of the passage.

"What is it I am to be afraid for, sir?" she said.

"Of anyone," Valcour said quietly, "who attempts to injure Mrs. Poole."

"Yes sir."

"You are not nervous?"

By stretching the imagination, her lips could have been said to smile. "I have lived with her for twenty years."

"You'll bolt the door?"

"Yes sir."

"Good night."

"Good night, sir."

She watched him until he had disappeared at the turn of the passage. She opened the cabin door and went inside. She closed the door and bolted it. She noticed, when she turned, that the curtain had been drawn across the lower bunk. She looked at Mrs. Poole. And Mrs. Poole, flushing faintly, looked at her.

(The startling climax of this remarkable mystery occurs in the ensuing chapters—in the next, the June, issue.)

STRAIGHT LINE STORY

(Continued from page 45)

produced a pair of dark blue trousers with bell-bottomed legs and side buttons.

"I was a sailor once," he offered vaguely to account for them. "I think they will fit you better than any others."

"Uh-huh." The girl took them and went out onto the screened back porch.

She did not come back.

"What's the matter?" Ben called to her finally.

"Scarcely anything. Come out and see what I've found."

He went. She was standing before an open cupboard and surveying the contents with approval.

"What?" Ben asked, noting that his trousers hid her feet entirely.

"Food," she explained. "Large quantities of delicious and nourishing food. I don't suppose you knew it was here, or you would have mentioned it—especially if you had known that I was too upset to eat breakfast this morning."

BEN had already got the idea to the extent that he had lighted a fire in the range. "I had rather thought that from what you said about honor and—"

"I know, but at that time I didn't know that you had all these lovely things. I wonder if any peas or corn ever looked like these pictures on the labels. Where is the can-opener? I must know the truth. You might as well stay and have lunch with me now—you'll have to eat somewhere, and the least I can do is to invite you."

Preparing and eating an *al fresco* meal proved to be an excellent way of getting acquainted. This girl was a good questioner. Not that she was offensive about it, but she had a way of drawing Ben out that put her in possession of almost all of the facts of his existence without telling him anything essential about herself at all.

"I'll wash up the dishes after you've gone back to work," she offered when lunch was over.

"But I have time to help."

"No. If you have a few mintes to spare, I'd rather hear the story about the bears."

"But my story is mostly about one bear."

"All right. One will be enough if it is a very fierce bear."

She seated herself comfortably on the doorstep—it was sunny there—and made room for him beside her.

Ben surveyed the layout. "Perhaps you'd rather have me sing you ' 'at song 'bout Sonny Boy.' "

"No thanks. I don't know you well enough to climb upon your knee. Begin: 'Once upon a time there was a great big black bear—' "

"Oh, I'm sorry," he said, "but this is a true story, and the bear is a sort of a reddish brown."

"A true story?"

"Absolutely. It's going to be printed in my autobiography."

"Oh. I usually prefer a good lie myself, but if it's the only bear story you know, let's have it."

"All right. This all happened when I was a young man and full of intrepidity, which you will probably never know what it is. I was traveling in the Mountains of Umber at the time—which, if you don't savvy the location of, you aren't apt to find out from me. I was on my way up a narrow trail when I came to a sign right in the middle of it which said: *'Trail blocked by boulder! Turn back!'* So I did. Part way down the mountainside I met a largish bear headed in the other direction, namely, up. There wasn't room enough for us to pass and he would not turn around and go my way. It was very annoying, because I knew there wasn't any use in his going on up, because of the boulder across the path. I had no language that he could understand in which to explain the situation, although I endeavored by means of pantomime to make him see the rock in the road. But either I was not a good pantomimist or else he was an especially dumb bear, because my act did not go across at all, and he gave me the razzberry. It wasn't so much what he said as the way he said it. And of course, I had no intention of turning around and going in the other direction, as he seemed to be suggesting. The upshot of the whole matter was that, after arguing for a while in a fashion that threatened to become heated, I gave way to a fit of temper and bashed him over the head with a bed-slat which I always carry for that purpose.

"The bear was stunned. Perhaps I had hit him harder than I really intended. I *had* broken my bed-slat. Anyway, he swayed from side to side a moment and then fell sideways down the side of the mountain. Naturally I was sorry, but it seemed to me that he had been a bit unreasonable, and at any rate the way was now clear. So I continued my descent. Imagine my surprise and embarrassment when, upon rounding the next turn. I found the way blocked once more by a largish brownish bear. Something told me that this second bear was the first one's legal wife. She had an air of prim and righteous indignation about her that could be worn successfully by no one

but a wife. For a moment I had hopes that she had not seen what had happened, but I took a swift look behind me and perceived that the fall of her husband must have been perfectly visible from where she stood. Besides that, there was no mistaking her attitude toward me. She was quite unreasonable. I saw that in order to convince her that there was really a boulder in the road, I would have to show her the actual rock itself.

"So I turned and led the way. She seemed in a hurry to get the matter over with, so I finally broke into a run. I felt that I might be late getting there even at that. Once or twice I reached back to my shoulders hopefully just in case I had sprouted wings with which I could fly over the boulder when I came to it. But there weren't any, and finally I came to the boulder itself.

"There it was, square across the narrow trail. To the right was a wall of sheer rock rising straight up for a hundred feet or more, and on the left was a straight drop into the valley half a mile below. The boulder itself was twenty-five feet high and as smooth as a cream fizz. Naturally, being the kind of a stone that it was, there wasn't even any moss on it. However I tried to climb, jumping high into the air and attempting to grab with my hands something that would hold. But it was useless. I slipped back almost into the jaws of the bear, who kept them open, probably from having had adenoids when a baby. I turned to the rock wall at the right—no hope. I looked down into the valley on the left. If I jumped, I knew I would be crushed. There was no way out."

He paused and gazed dreamily across the cañon.

"Go on," prompted his audience breathlessly. "What on earth did you do?"

"There just wasn't *anything* to do. I had to apologize."

A tinkling sound inside the cabin.

"Saved by the bell," exclaimed Ben as he rose. "Pardon me while I answer the telephone."

"THIS is Gay," said a voice. "Gay Perrill down at the studio. It's darned lucky for you that I reached you."

"Why?" demanded Ben idly. "If MacArtey is sore because—"

"No, no. Hush up and listen. This has nothing to do with MacArtey. You were seen getting into your car by the studio gateman. That wouldn't matter, only you were with a dame that they're looking all over for. The guy she was going to marry has got your address from the office here, and he's on his way up to your place. We didn't dream you'd be fool enough to go home, or one of us would have called you long ago. But it just occurred to me that you might accidentally be there, so—"

"How long ago did this bird start up?"

"About half an hour."

"In what?"

"In a Cruzenburg Eight with dual valve ignition—"

"Never mind the specifications. I don't want to buy one. Good-by."

Ben hung up thoughtfully. Was there time to get out? Even if there was, could he elude a swift Cruzenburg in his aged coupé? Probably not.

The decision was taken out of his hands.

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His guest in her gob outfit came in hurriedly from the porch and slammed the door shut.

"Where's the key?" she demanded.

"There isn't any."

"Help me drag the table over, then, as a barricade."

They had hold of opposite ends of the heavy oak piece of furniture, when the door opened and a large gentleman entered, followed immediately by a smaller one. Both were wearing formal morning attire, including gardenias.

"Excuse my butler's absence," greeted Ben, standing in such a way that the table was between himself and the newcomers. "He went to the chemist's for a quart of iodine and some adhesive plaster. So wont you please announce yourselves?"

"You know damn' well who I am."

"Not specifically," denied Ben. "I know that, in the jargon of the studio, you are what we call 'the menace,' but your names and so forth escape me."

THE large young man did not furnish the information requested. Instead he pointed toward the rear door. "Where does that go to?"

"The back porch."

"Oh! And what is beyond that?"

"Nothing but the cañon down below. It's handy for dumping garbage."

"It will be. Arthur, guard that front door!" the talkative intruder ordered.

"O. K., Spike," acknowledged Arthur.

"Don't let him out that way, and I'll just teach this son of a sea-beast the running broad jump out the back door."

"Easy with the language, my friend. There is a lady present," reminded Ben.

"Not according to my standards," retorted Spike, looking directly at the young woman who had recently escaped marriage with him. "She's nothing but a—"

Smack!

Ben had not realized for sure that he could jump clear across the table and land a blow at the same time, but it had seemed worth trying.

Spike was not seriously injured, but his attention was diverted. He reached for Ben, who, fortunately, lost his balance at that moment and fell to the floor. Spike kicked at him, but Ben grabbed his foot and stood up with it suddenly, thus reversing positions somewhat, and with a bang, too—when Spike's head hit the floor—that jolted the little cottage from roof to rafter.

The girl, who had one of the lighter chairs in her hands, raised it over her head with the intention of bringing it down on Spike's cranium.

"Wait!" said Ben. "That wouldn't be fighting fair. Leave Spike to me."

"Can you handle him?"

"I don't know. It'll be fun to try."

"Then will it be all right if I brain Arthur?"

"Oh, absolutely, if you think he is as fully equipped as that. Consider him your private and personal dish. I hereby waive all rights and— Whoa!"

Spike had struggled to his feet and swung at Ben, a mean, scientific swing that missed Ben's ear by a millimeter measurement.

Spike was much larger than Ben, about twenty per cent larger all around. But to equalize that, Spike was wearing much

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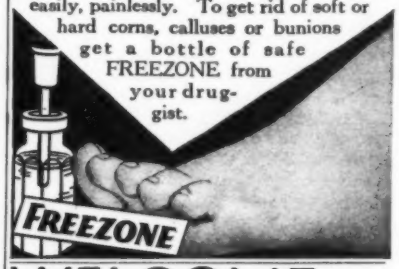

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tighter clothing. And there was the hangover to be considered. And the gardenia.

Because of them Ben was able to move in under Spike's guard and deliver a fistful of emphasis on Spike's jaw.

Unfortunately, Spike's arms were like tentacles, and they closed around Ben's slighter figure before the latter could wriggle free. That was just about what Spike had been hoping for, and he grunted with satisfaction as he squeezed Ben to his bosom like a long-lost brother-octopus.

They crashed noisily to the floor—noisily because all of the dishes from the recent lunch went with them. The moral of this is: always wash the dishes immediately after you finish eating. The chances are that neither of the boys was really wounded very seriously, but there had been some tomato catsup on the plates, and by the time they had rolled around in it a bit, the effect was horrendous. Each looked as if he had spent a pleasant half-hour with a slugger.

The girl screamed—and then inquired anxiously: "Where do you keep your bedslat?"

Ben did not have time to answer, but she looked for it herself and found a golf-club. In spite of Ben's admonition to keep out, she swung it over her head and brought it down—unfortunately, on Ben's head.

"I must have looked up," the girl mourned ruefully.

"Much obliged," murmured Spike, getting to his feet.

"Don't thank me," returned the girl courteously, at the same time aiming a blow at his stomach which struck him on the kneecap—almost as good a place, perhaps better.

"Hey, my dear girl, you can't do that!" The protest was uttered by the Horatius at the door, a post which he abandoned to come to the aid of his fallen leader, who was doing a war-dance sitting on the floor.

"Yes, I can," the dear girl replied. "All I need is practice. See!" She tapped Arthur in quite businesslike fashion on the place where gentlemen in sport-clothes wear their belt buckles. "And I've been taught to replace divots."

IN the comparatively peaceful interim that ensued, the trousered young lady made a quick dash to the kitchen, where she found a granite-ware pitcher of water. This she dashed over Ben's face. It not only revived him almost immediately, but it also miraculously removed the scarlet traces of conflict from his face. His features emerged in their natural pallor.

The girl stooped and kissed him on the clean, wet forehead. "I'm so glad!" she whispered.

Perhaps Ben did not notice the contact. His mind was working so rapidly on what to do while there was still time.

"Can you drive that Cruzenburg?"

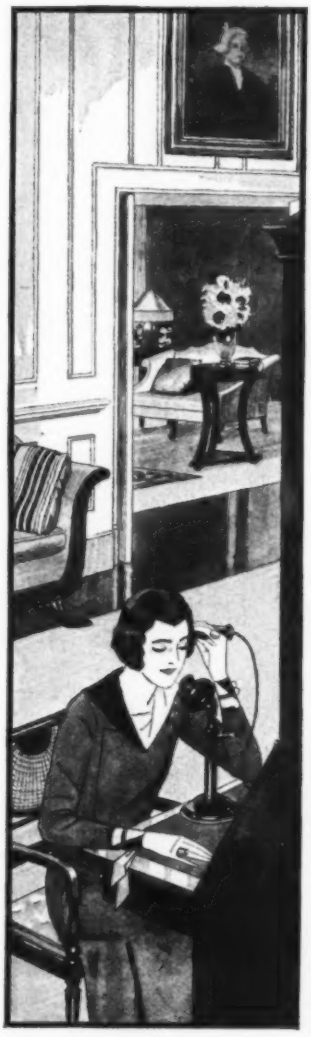
"Sure."

"All right. Take it and get away. No one can catch you while you're in that bus. Go anywhere you can think of. Some place no one would ever think of looking. Don't tell anybody."

"And leave you here alone?"

"I wont be alone. I'll have Spike and little Arthur to cheer me up. Besides, I'll only wait until you get a good start and

Your Friends who Live in Other Cities



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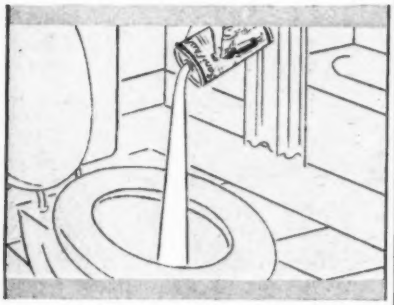

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then I'll drive my own car back to work."

"And leave them in your cottage?"

"Sure. Even if they're playful, there isn't much more that will break. Besides, it doesn't belong to me, anyway. I just rent it. Be on your way."

The girl left. The scarcely perceptible sound of a perfect motor starting followed shortly upon her exit.

Ben listened to the remarks of his guests for a few moments and then went to the door himself.

"The quickest way to get down," he advised before shutting the door, "is to jump off the back porch. Be careful not to land on any broken bottles."

His shabby coupé proceeded at a break-neck pace down the mountainside. Even at that, he never even caught sight of the Cruzenburg.

THE supervisor was in conference with the construction gang when Ben got back to the studio.

"Where have you been?" MacArtey asked.

"Out to lunch," Ben explained, keeping his hat on so no one would notice the lump on top of his head.

"Oh! Out to lunch?" the supervisor repeated sarcastically. "For five hours?"

"Well," explained Ben, "I wasn't eating all the time. While I was out I was struck by an idea for that straight line story, and I thought I'd follow it up."

"Oh, that's nice." The supe knew that Ben was fired anyway, and he enjoyed being nasty. "Suppose you tell us, then, some absolutely new and novel way for our star to meet the heroine of his new feature, some clever and unconventional scene that has never been pulled before."

"All right," said Ben, "I will."

And he did, still keeping his hat on. Having considerable imagination, Ben embroidered and improved upon real life until he had quite a story.

Even MacArtey admitted it. "That's O. K., Ben. It's just exactly what we need. Forget that little talk we had yesterday and come to my office tomorrow to sign a new contract I'll have ready for you. The only thing I don't see is how you finish your story."

"Oh, I didn't claim that it was finished. I thought I'd better report with what I had and let the gang get busy with the finish—that is, if you thought it was good enough."

"Well, I certainly do. This is the story we're going to shoot—beginning next Monday. You birds dust off your brains and get me a rough idea for the ending before you leave tonight."

That was MacArtey's valedictory. He left the room steeped in a deep, cautious silence, that lasted for five minutes or until MacArtey was surely out of earshot. Then Gay Perrill got up and kicked Ben on the shin.

"You cock-eyed louse," he hissed. "Look what you've gone and done! We're stuck here until midnight maybe, or later, trying to get a clever finish for that impossible yarn of yours."

"No, no, Gay," interrupted Francis, "be easy on the lad. Don't do him any physical violence. And most of all don't hurt him on the head. He's the one who has to do the thinking. I've got a good novel to read that'll just about last until he gets an idea. He dug us into this trap. Now let him find a way out."

"Right," agreed Bill Stewart, balancing his chair in a position in which he had been known to sleep. "Just hang a 'Busy' sign on the door, lock it and let our confrère simmer in this stew he has cooked up. All in favor say Aye!"

"Aye!"

"Absolutely unanimous."

They didn't really mean it, of course, and the entire crew went to work on the story. But they didn't get anywhere. Every solution seemed out of character or had been done before.

It was long past quitting time—although, officially, there is no quitting time for men engaged in construction work on a story which has been definitely dated to start shooting in the immediate future.

Six o'clock. Not an idea. Telephone.

Bill Stewart answered it, because he could do it without moving.

"For you, Ben."

"Hello," said Ben.

"The same to you." He recognized her voice. It was thrilling, darned if it wasn't! And real. He had wondered if maybe she was not merely an idea he had had.

"I told you not to let anybody know where you were."

The other three chairs in the room came down with a bang as Bill, Francis and Gay strained forward to hear.

"But I'm not telling anybody but you."

"Oh, all right. Where are you?"

"Well, I'm at your shack."

"How in the name of Will Hays did you get there?"

"I've never been away, really. You see, when I took Spike's car, I went up the mountain instead of down. Then I hid there and watched. When Spike and Arthur finally went away, I came back here and cleaned up the place. They'd never think of looking for me here. So I thought I'd ask you if it would be all right for me to stay for a few days."

"Why—I don't know. Yes, of course."

"Thanks. Dinner is almost ready. Will you be long?"

"Wait a minute while I think. I don't think I ought—"

"There's a steak and fried onions, and I've made a pie out of—"

"Say no more. I'll come."

"Good-by. Hurry home."

"Good-by. Wait a minute! Listen—I don't know what your name is!"

But she had hung up.

BEN looked around. Three large men stood between him and the door, looks of grim determination divided equally between them.

"Come across," declared Gay, spokesman as usual. "Give us the finish of this story, or you don't keep that date. We know your part of the conversation, but you've got to tell us what she said. Speak up."

Ben laughed. There was a window. He went through it, screen and all. The office was on the ground floor.

He stopped outside and put his head in.

"You slaves make up your own ending. It will be better than the real one, anyway."

But he knew in his heart of hearts that he was wrong.

THE AUCTIONING OF MARY ANGEL

(Continued from page 55)

parents for throwing all the blame on me. They ought to have told me that life was a bungle. They didn't. They never educated me in any way to protect myself. All the girls of my class are being educated exactly as I was, to attract men, that they may marry them, quite regardless of whether they have any aptitude for marriage."

"Which brings us back to your coming-out party," I suggest. "Thank heaven we're back. It's been a long wander."

"So at last you're going to be a sensible collaborator,"—she jogs my ribs with her elbow,—"and let me tell my story in my own artless fashion. It's my turn to insist on your being logical. If you don't approve of me, you mustn't approve of Mummy, because I'm what she made me. I was a blank sheet of paper till she took to scribbling on me. Till she had snatched me from the convent to plunge me into the worldliness of St. Jean de Luz, my soul was as innocent as an angel's. Lest you've forgotten your Bible, let me remind you that no distinction is made in heaven between boy-angels and girl-angels. They're all sexless—a little like you, Uncle Biff—guileless, cherubic bachelors.

"Anyway, until my experiences at St. Jean I'd been gullible as a silly goldfish. I'd gobbled without examining all the copy-book maxims which had been fed me. 'Life is real. Life is earnest'—balderdash of that sort. Having my affections stolen by a man who turned out to be married, had taught me how real life was.

"Mummy didn't let up on me. I'd given her a scare and cut short her holiday. Our transatlantic voyage homeward was one continuous lecture. Girls who permitted themselves to be picked up by strangers, especially strangers who hadn't been introduced to their mammas, were almost certain to end badly.

"That was Mummy all over. When she'd pulled a bloomer, the fault was mine. If picking up strangers was disgraceful, she'd been picking them up all summer. I'd only followed her example. Of course I can read now what was worrying her: she was afraid that after such a sickener, when I became a débutante I mightn't try to attract boys. If I couldn't make the opposite sex swarm after me like bees after honey, I would gain the reputation for being unpopular. If that happened, she convinced me, I might as well never have been born.

"You noticed the success of her coaching at my coming-out ball. I did my darnedest to appear obliging, passing from one perspiring dance-partner to another with the fixed smile of a complaisant doll. Already she'd thrown the terror into me that I would never get married."

"TELL me, Mary Angel," I divert her from the sore topic, "what did it feel like, after having been treated like a little girl, to find yourself suddenly considered a young lady?"

"Horrid." She pulls a face at me. "It was the first time I had been privileged to witness the spectacle of my elders getting drunk in public. They were

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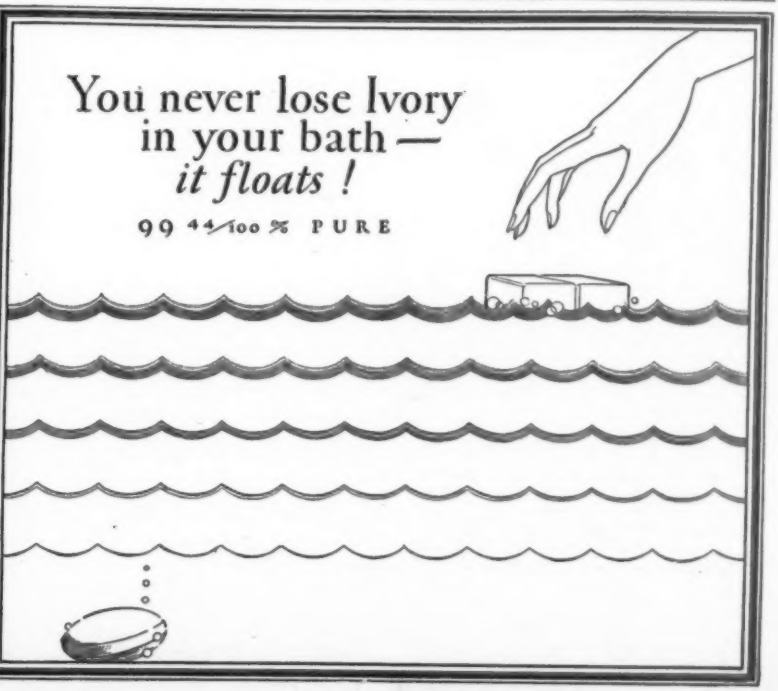

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Color of my hair:

getting drunk in my honor on liquor supplied by my parents. Naturally I'm hardened to such sights now—I'm not anything like as censorious. But you're asking how it felt to be included for the first time in such orgies. I could scarcely believe my eyes when, as the evening wore on, I noticed the transformations that were taking place all over the ballroom. I'd believed that all my seniors were saints beyond criticism, because they'd been so very rigid over scrutinizing my morals. And here they were, married men and women, ogling one another, making risqué remarks, and shrieking like poll-parrots."

"The same as those young people in runabouts," I interpolate slyly.

"And without their excuse," she snaps me up, "for they weren't young, and they had no right to be passionate. My worst shock was Mummy; she was the vamp of the party. I was becoming disgusted. Hypocrisy grinned at me from every corner. And then I met Alec."

"Which Alec?" I inquire. "There have been so many."

"The first, of course. I didn't know him from Adam; he appealed to me because he was sober. An intoxicated judge, who passes sentence on wayward girls, was tickling my ribs and complaining that his wife still wore corsets, when I collared Alec's eye and signaled to him to rescue me.

"'Sorry,' I apologized. 'The judge fancied he was a sheik and that I was a ukelele, or whatever they play in the desert.'

"'The party's getting rough. They always do toward morning,' Alec enlightened me.

"'I should say it's got.' I glanced down at my trampled feet to make sure they weren't bleeding.

"'I wish I were in bed.' He yawned.

"'Then why aren't you?'

"'I was waiting to claim a dance with you.'

"'Go to bed,' I advised. 'Your poor eyes are hanging on your cheeks.'

"'I will,' he agreed, 'if you'll promise to let me call on you.'

"When I'd promised, he left me. I danced on and on. Alec is my one sane memory of that nightmare.

"NEXT morning I didn't wake till lunchtime. Mummy was sitting on my bed. 'Dearest, you were a riot—quite too adorable!' she exclaimed.

"'Where's Daddy?' I questioned.

"'Gone to business. Why shouldn't he, when so many expensive things have to be paid for?'

"A sermon followed on how much my coming-out had cost. I could have replied that a good deal of the cost had been wasted on intoxicating people who probably wished by now that they hadn't been intoxicated. I was anxious, however, to appear grateful.

"Mummy fell to discussing eligible males and giving me tips as to which were most worthy of attention. The chief recommendation appeared to be the size of their fathers' bank-accounts, and after that their ability to introduce me to New York society. She didn't say it, but she implied that men were inferior creatures to be employed as stepping-stones to higher things and then kicked from under you. When I informed her that Alec had a date with me, she was disappointed, not because Alec wasn't a perfectly honorable person, but because, 'He's a nobody, darling—just a good-looking, well-dressed dummy to stand in a stag-line.'

"I wont pretend, Uncle Biff, to give you a verbatim report of my conversation with Alec that evening. All the latter part of the afternoon the telephone had been ringing, and young men had been trying to make appointments with me. Mummy had become increasingly annoyed that I'd booked myself up. However, she played the game by clearing Daddy out of the library so that I might not be embarrassed by a spectator.

"'For heaven's sake, don't gum yourself the way you did at St. Jean,' she cautioned. 'To keep men in their place, you must keep them hoping.'

"Alec and I sat side by side on a couch as harmlessly as you and I are sitting at present. If Mummy thought we were throwing gasoline on love's bonfire, she was mistaken. Half the time, if you only knew it, when youth's supposed to be flaming, it's conducting gloomy post-mortems on the sins of your generation. That was what we were doing.

"Alec was so awfully sympathetic, and it was so long since I'd compared notes with anyone of my own age, that I told him everything—how I'd lost my heart to the Englishman whom I'd since discovered was married. I told him how Mummy had blamed me and asked him whether he considered me blameworthy.

"'It was tough luck. Of course not.'

"From that we got to analyzing the events of the previous night. I couldn't see what I'd gained by being brought out and said so.

"'You've gained nothing.' He held my paw as spiritually as if we had been a pair of cherubim. 'Until you're scrapped as out-of-date or married, which is the same thing, you're in for a more exhausting round of dissipation than any Broadway chorus girl. Gee, but I pity you!'

"'Alec,' I said, seeing a gleam of hope, 'how long till I get scrapped as out-of-date?'

"'It partly depends on you, Mary, and how long you can stand the racket. Some girls get scrapped at the end of their first season. Débutantes are like automobiles; each new crop has distinguishing paint-jobs and improved lines. A girl who belongs to a model a bit ahead of the fashion may remain snappy for two years.'

"'And after that, Alec?'

"'Among her old pals she's regarded as still serviceable.'

"'But for how long, Alec?'

"'For a third season. In her fourth, like a creaking actress she begins to give farewell performances and goes on giving them till empty houses hint that she should retire.'

"Here was honest advice—not prejudiced stuff like Mummy's. It was an opportunity to be exploited.

"'I don't intend to marry, Alec, because as I've told you, my heart is broken. At the same time I couldn't bear to retire. What must I do to be considered snappy?'

"'I hate to tell you, Mary; you're such an unspoiled kid.'

"'But do,' I urged.

"'The most successful line is to short-

change your customers in private, but in public to act liberal as a free-lunch counter. Seem to be game to take all hurdles, but at the last moment avoid 'em. Never say *no* to an invitation; though you're dying on your feet, pretend to be ecstatic. However fresh a guy gets, don't show that you resent it; if you do, he'll spread the good word that you were the bad-actor. Never consult your watch, especially after midnight, or you'll gain the reputation for being a prune and a kill-joy. Four nights in the week you must be wandering the streets at an hour when high-class burglars are snug in their little cots. The other three nights you will chase your family out of sight and devote to try-outs. A try-out is the kind of session we're now conducting: you're dressed to the nines, a new boy on the couch, shaded lamps, curtained windows, absolute privacy. Half your boy-friends will be gum-drops. Don't let that discourage you. Sit them out. Hide their coats and hats till they've proposed to you. When they have, pretend that that wasn't what you'd intended. Let them nibble, but keep them starving. As soon as they get outside your door, they'll really start to love you because you let them off.'

"'But what's the sense?' I gasped.

"'It's sheer craziness.' He grinned. 'These are a few pages torn at random from 'A Débutante's Guide to Etiquette.' Boiled down, they amount to: to thine own self be false, and it shall follow as the night the day, then canst thou not be true to any man.'"

MARY squints at me impishly as she smooths her bobbed hair. Unable to control myself, I burst out: "Why quote such bilge? The fellow was either pulling your leg or he was an idiot.'

"Wrong again, Uncle. How frequently wrong you are! His every word was a prophecy. Take what he said about looking liberal as a free-lunch counter. Haven't you noticed the disconcerting trick I have of purring against you or any man?"

"I certainly have." I jerk away from her. "I would never have mentioned it, unless you— It's most embarrassing. Liable to be misunderstood."

"It's meant to be misunderstood." Fondling me with her eyes, she withdraws, leaving a gap. "I've been trained to make promises I can't and wont fulfill. I haven't been married long enough to recapture my lost sincerity."

"I wish you were modest as you used to be." I speak earnestly.

She sighs profoundly.

"I was born modest. Unfortunately there were people in the world ahead of me; they set me a bad example. Come to think of it, Eve was the only girl who hadn't any parents; even she went wrong. No good crying over spilt milk. But where were we? I was receiving pointers on how to navigate the social whirlpool. According to Alec, it was the invention of ambitious mammas."

"That horse is dead. Can't you stop flogging it?"

"Not even for you, Uncle Biff. We're conducting a crusade against the abuse of matrimony. The social whirlpool wouldn't exist if there weren't daughters to get married. Here's the proof of it—who

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ever heard of a coming-out party given for a boy? All the rottenness of which my generation is accused and for which your generation is actually responsible, is caused by panic-stricken mammas with little schoolgirls to market. What chance would we have to be rotten if we weren't over-entertained, supplied with automobiles, hip-flasks and too much pocket-money?"

"So you trace your wildness to parents' mistaken kindness?"

"I do not. It isn't kindness, mistaken or otherwise. It isn't even meant to be kindness. Alec traced our wildness to our parents' worship of money. He said that they hadn't anything else to give us, so they gave us money in gobs. To see their children flinging away with both hands what they themselves had saved, made them feel that they belonged to the aristocracy. He was really awfully clever; you've got to listen to what he told me, whether you agree with it or not. Women, when they'd passed thirty, he said, nearly all degenerated into snobs. Men weren't naturally dollar-hounds; their wives' extravagances drove them to earn more and more, till at last the pursuit of wealth became their only passion. You get the idea, Uncle Biff: the women gambling at bridge, running to theaters, decking themselves with Queen of Sheba plumage, scampering to Europe; the men thankful to be allowed to drudge, since their homes meant nothing to them. The possession of a marriageable daughter provided women of forty with a new excuse for squandering. Hence the vulgar display which launched me.

"'Mummy says my coming-out party entailed a terrific sacrifice,' I attempted a defense to Alec.

"'Don't you believe her, kiddo,' he warned. 'Mothers always pretend that whatever they do is sacrificial.'

"THEN he tore their pretence wide open. Even you, Uncle Biff, will have to acknowledge the truth of his criticisms. This social nonsense played ducks and drakes with a boy's career at college and made him worthless to his employers after he'd entered business. It gave him a false sense of his own importance and burnt up his energies. For a girl it was even worse. It taught her to cash in on her good looks and to focus on nothing but winning masculine attention. After a season or two she became as physically selfish and as mentally immoral as a courtesan."

"I'm sure he never said that," I expostulate.

"Perhaps he didn't in those words," she concedes. "I'm abbreviating for you. The fact remains that when two babes-in-the-wood wed with frazzled nerves stimulated by alcohol, you can't expect much in the way of tolerance. I gave our conversation a new slant by asking Alec what constituted society. He treated my question as a joke and coughed up the wisest answers."

"Probably he blackguarded your parents still further while sharing their hospitality."

"What a cute little guesser you are, Uncle Biff! Alec wasn't the sort you could gag with hospitality. Society in a democracy, according to him, was a fungus-growth. Years ago, when the Four Hundred were first discovered, a neat little guillotine erected in Washington Square could have cured the abnormality. Now every sniveling little burg had its assembly ball and list of socially elect. The fun of being on the list was that you could keep your neighbors off—make them uncomfortable by high-hatting them. But the price of high-hatting was that you got high-hatted in your turn, for the eligibles of Lancaster were the negligibles of Cleveland, and the eligibles of Cleveland the negligibles of New York. The inventors of this amiable sport were matrons who in their youth had been so unfortunate as to give birth to daughters."

"What was Alec's game?" I halt her. "He must have had some object."

I SENSE at once that I scored a bull's-eye.

"He wanted to rescue me before I'd become a sophisticated ruin."

"How rescue you?"

"Uncle Biff, you do try my patience! By marrying me, of course. I followed his advice, allowed him to nibble and left him hoping."

"So that was your first proposal, Mary Angel? You were a fast worker. It begins to look to me as though the faults you attribute to others were the results of your own temperament. The more you tell me about yourself, the more you acquit your mother. I've been thinking while I've listened, that you're a good deal of a ventriloquist: Alec's lips appear to move, but the arguments that issue from them are yours."

"Think what you like." She tosses her head haughtily. "At any rate I'm not camouflaging. It was past two in the morning when Alec departed. I had supposed that the house was sleeping. Having turned out the hall-lights, I was tiptoeing up the stairs when I spotted Daddy, looking crumpled and waiting for me in his dressing-gown. I was afraid he was going to be angry, but he put his arm about me.

"'I wasn't eavesdropping, little girl. I'm forbidden by your mother to be wise for you. But be careful. You're the only little girl I have. However late you return, you'll always find me sitting up for you.'

"And I always did, Uncle Biff, even to the night before my wedding. I hate to think how I copied Mummy in using him as a doormat. He's getting some sleep at last, poor darling. No wonder he considers me a pest."

"You've made two false statements in almost the same breath." I betray irritation. "In the first place, your mother isn't the woman to use her husband as a doormat; in the second, your father doesn't consider you a pest."

"Rot, Uncle Biff." She flames at me. "Face facts. What has Daddy ever got out of marriage but the right to settle his wife's debts? Between me and Mummy he's led the life of a dog."

"My dear child, American men are noted for their chivalry."

"The pathetic, powerless boobs!" She leaps to her feet and gazes into the darkness from the window, turning her back on me. "If you want to know what Amer-

ican husbands are, they're a laughing-stock. They're afraid of their wives and they bankrupt themselves for their princess daughters. American daddies are so unselfish that little beasts, like myself, aren't worthy to clean their shoes."

SHE swings round, emotionally, adorably.

"Thank God, American boys aren't copying their fathers! They know girls are cheats and see through them. When they've been swindled in their marriages, they cut their losses to save their souls. That's what Jeff did. Don't you dare to blame him."

"My dear child, the hour is growing late. I've done nothing that you should storm at me. Jeff's name was dragged into the conversation by you."

Feeling hurt and indignant, I go in search of my coat and hat. Having called good-night to her from the passage, I am on the point of departing when she joins me.

"I haven't been as divine as I intended and promised. But you wont let my rudeness prevent you from visiting me? You were awfully fond of me once, Uncle Biff. I must have been a decent little kid then. But wrap your muffler round your throat. No, not like that—let me do it."

Without my letting, she does it, putting the finishing touch to her repentance by tiptoeing against me and kissing me on the nose.

"About Jeff, Uncle Biff—I wasn't educated to be a wife. That was the trouble. Don't judge him harshly."

"I have no grounds for judging," I remind her.

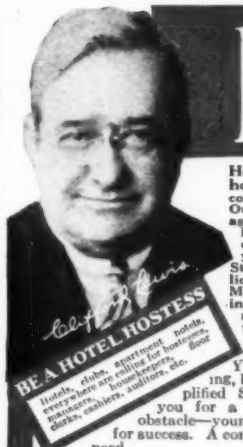
She accompanies me along the corridor to the elevator.

"If you'll forgive me and come again," she promises, "I'll explain everything."

MARY and her problems are troubling my conscience. Against my will I am beginning to view my generation through her young eyes. So next morning, being Sunday, I cancel an engagement to play golf and take myself off to church.

Pews are sprinkled with women when I arrive. Men are conspicuous by their absence. The women fall into two categories: matrons, deputizing for their families, and old maids. Mary's mother is there ahead of me. How often have I entered this sacred building solely to worship her! She wears miraculously—I believe that's the phrase. She really hasn't changed much since days when I hoped she would accept me. Once she was Lilian to me, the embodiment of every perfection. But why do I say *was?* Were she a widow tomorrow, you would find me on her doorstep. And yet I can't help wondering what opinion God holds of her and, scarcely less interesting, what opinion she holds of herself. If I'd given my child the go-by, I fancy I would steer clear of divine service. She sits there meek and lovely, fashionably attired, giving a rendering of a worldly saint.

Strange! While Mary is with me, she rouses my combativeness; when she's absent I tend to side with her. During the singing of the hymns and reading of the lessons I recall our gawky conversations and meditate on her inconsistencies. Then it's the inconsistency of the world in gen-



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eral that absorbs me. Since Lilian is a Protestant, why did she educate her daughter at a convent? The poor child wanted to be a nun. She was torn from her pious cloisters, dedicated to the flesh and married as a Protestant from this very church.

I glance round at the smug appearance of the congregation—beefy, well-fed, unimaginative. One might suppose that every worshiper had been presented with a pass to heaven. But how would they kill time if they got there? No cocktails; no bridge-clubs; not a chance of making money by a flutter on the Stock Exchange, nor of spending it on personal decoration if gained. All angels dress alike; their white robes last forever. Mary's ranting against hypocrisy seems less exaggerated this morning.

THE sermon begins. It's a sugar-coated discourse for the deserving. Latecomers are slipping into back pews. It's easy to guess what has detained them—too much self-indulgence last night. The sermon contains not one word against gluttony. Mary would say that the latecomers' attendance is eye-wash—an attempt to make themselves appear respectable. Scarcely any young people are present. They're too keen on this life to feel the need of the next.

Illuminated by Mary's revelations, the vision rises before me of a godless world. Despite what the preacher may say, we live for our appetites as though we were no higher than the beasts that perish. What are the rest of the congregation thinking? About their golf-scores and dressmakers' bills—about anything and everything but heaven. Well might Mary tell me, "I was never educated to be a wife." Yet it was in this building, fragrant with flowers, she was informed that God Himself was blessing her union.

The cant of professing a religion which we make no attempt to practice, chokes me. I am able to think of nothing but a pretty child, a succulent morsel for gossip, sitting alone in proud defiance. If these singers of hymns were Christians, the preacher would announce: "We will now adjourn to Mary Angel's apartment. She's been abandoned by her husband. We failed to do our duty by her. She needs our comfort."

I grope for my hat. I'm adjourning, leaving the minister to drone on and repeat himself.

BETWEEN closed shops I stride uptown. I'm becoming as unjust as Mary in my wholesale condemning. Reaching the avenue in which she dwells, between her parents' house and her apartment I meet her father.

He greets me with forced heartiness. "Hullo, Biff, old man; you're just in time. Step in for a cocktail."

"Impossible."

"But do. You can't cold-shoulder me. I haven't spoken to you for ages."

"Any more than you've spoken to your daughter," I retort maliciously.

I'm admitted to Mary's apartment by Louisa, the colored maid, and immediately become suspicious. There's a smell of pipe-tobacco.

"With you in a second. I'm getting up," she calls from her bedroom.

So she's not even dressed! That makes matters worse. I've caught her red-handed. Without intending to play the spy, I examine an ash-tray. Some one within a few minutes of my entrance has knocked out the contents of a pipe.

Aware that time must be hanging on my hands, Mary shouts remarks. She's in high spirits and keeps me informed as to the progress she is making:

"Now my stockings—"

I occupy myself by studying the view from her windows. The hill falls away into a deep valley, crowded with obscure dwellings. Scarcely a plume of smoke is rising. Factories have ceased to breathe.

"A dab of powder on my nose, you poor old thing, and your penance is ended."

She comes humming into the room.

"See how I've snaked up for you." She slips an arm through mine.

She insists that I stay to lunch. During the meal she prattles about non-essentials. Not till Louisa has vanished to join an ebony admirer at a street-corner, does she become serious.

"You were offended by the dirty cracks I made last night. You thought I was too hard on Mummy. I wasn't hard on her as my mother, but as a type. Things being as they are, she could scarcely help herself."

"That's the saner attitude," I congratulate her. "And things being as they are, you could scarcely help yourself either. Nevertheless, you were a tremendous trial to your parents."

"I was a more tremendous trial to myself. Can you imagine the emptiness of my existence, being forced to act as though I were boy-mad, when I wasn't? A girl has to appear to be boy-mad if she hopes to be popular. If she isn't popular, she might as well be in her grave."

I HAVE no answer prepared. It's my secret conviction since my latest discovery, that she's still boy-mad. What was that fellow doing in her apartment before I arrived?

"Before I continue my autobiography," —she assumes the self-conscious air of a budding authoress,—"I have two ideas that might be useful. Here's the first: that a little marriage is a dangerous thing."

"And what do you mean by that?"

"I thought it was a rather smart observation," she smiles. "It accounts for the Reno habit. One shouldn't marry at all or should marry several times. But let the idea go; I see you don't approve of it."

"What's the second?"

"The second is a play upon words. This apartment-house is named Mildred Mansions. Jeff and I used to call it Mildewed Mansions. The part of the avenue where Daddy resides is sacred to inhabitants who can afford chauffeurs and ladies' maids. Our part descends to a lower level. The drop is so sudden as to be appalling. We thought Mildewed Mansions a joke."

"I'll make a note of it."

"Then the ground is clear to push forward with my autobiography. I'll deal first with the effect my coming-out had on my character; afterwards I'll give you a rapid sketch of my adventures with the cherubim.

"The effect of my coming-out was utterly corrupting. It gave me an entirely wrong conception of my own value. Six months before, I'd been a kid at a convent whose opinions hadn't counted. All of a sudden, by virtue of becoming a débutante, everything I wore and every party I attended was chronicled in the social columns—sometimes even in the New York papers. I and the Prince of Wales seemed to be running neck to neck. I occupied far more space than artists or philanthropists. Mummy was raised to the seventh heaven. I was mentioned as the charming, the winsome, the every other flatteringly adjectived daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Harry Angel. The praise went to my head. I began to believe that I was the cat's pajamas. I didn't know, and nobody told me, that the same line was being handed by the local press to every other halfway-pretty débutante in the United States. I became so inflated, Mummy helping me, that I really thought I was putting my family in the shade and that they ought to be grateful. Silly of me, wasn't it?"

"But the cherubim, as you call your suitors—what about them?"

"I'm coming to them; but there's a point I want to clear up. Everyone impressed on me (I can't say who—it was in the air), that youth is fleeting. That because it's fleeting, it's more precious than attainments or wealth. I mustn't waste a second on men too old or on men already married. That was why when you asked me to dance, I always accepted with reluctance."

"I used to notice that," I acknowledge ruefully.

"Well, that was the reason," she nods brightly. "I wasn't heartless. I didn't like you any the less. I was a person running to catch a train. The train was a young man, handsome and rich enough to be considered desirable. If you had hunted, as I have, you'd know that there aren't enough of them to go round. Every débutante has to be loved, so I grabbed at makeshifts to keep my hand in."

"They were the cherubim at whom you grabbed, I presume. If the question isn't too personal, what was their attitude to you? Were they always fussers and flirts—or were their intentions gravely honorable?"

HER eyes sparkle. They forewarn me that she is about to shock me.

"As honorable as could be expected. Some of them were dollar-hounds who believed that Daddy could endow them with a fortune, which was an impression Mummy did her best to exaggerate. You blink skeptically, you innocent old darling. Take it from me, love in a cottage is out of date. The modern lover before he allows himself to love, has girls card-catalogued according to their possessions. College-boys are financiers and hand each other tips: 'Pretty nothing! Steer clear of her. You'll have to support her family.' You can't blame them. From their cradles they've heard money rated above virtue. They've been automobiled, wined, given a place on the stag-line simply because they're an extra pair of pants. We girls have taught them not to respect us. Since the world began, girls have married for money. Now that

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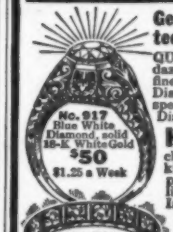

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women are men's equals, why shouldn't men do the same? For my part I don't see any difference in vulgarity between a girl who marries a fat-tummied banker and a John who snuggles up to a plain Jane. Girls have no more right to expect chivalry, than men have to expect gentleness. When bobbed hair came in, girls ceased to be ministering angels."

"Shatterer of idols!" I mop my forehead.

"I'm not shattering your idols." She pats my hand consolingly. "They're already shattered. A successful modern marriage is one that pays dividends."

"I can't keep pace with your cynicism," I protest.

"But it isn't cynicism, Uncle Biff; it's honesty. Boys and girls—they're male and female grafters, doing their best to outbluff each other. If a boy's head is screwed on the right way, why shouldn't he win by a lucky marriage what would take him years of unaided effort to accomplish? A girl with any reputation for wealth is rushed by all sorts and kinds. If I'd had a hare-lip, it would have made no difference. That being the case, you waste your tears when you weep over my turn-downs. Believe me, they didn't weep over themselves; they sought another Jane, a trifle less handsome, perhaps, whose bank-account was bigger."

"I had no idea,"—actually I doubt her,—"that the young men of today were as bad as that."

"Then it's time you woke up," she counsels me cheerfully. "They're worse. I've stated the case mildly. But the fault isn't theirs; it's their parents'. Probably you're not wise to the trick of obtaining *dossiers* on suitors when a love-affair begins to ripen. There was never a boy looked serious, who came to our house, but Daddy got his *dossier*—not his, but his papa's. I have only the vaguest idea how it's done. I believe you go to your bank. Anyhow, Mummy was perpetually advising me against this boy or that—not to gum myself; though his home had the appearance of wealth, everything his father owned was mortgaged. Of course it goes without question that the boys' parents took the same precautions with regard to us.

"The effect on me was to heighten my distrust of men. I held off from them, while making every motion to attract them. I suppose my bloomer with the married Englishman had started my suspicion complex."

I ALLOW her to ramble on. She was expected, it seems, to peel off her schoolgirl frock and wallow without a qualm in sophistication. Naturally she framed hostile judgments, all of which were suppressed. Wearied with worldliness and the profitless round of late nights and later mornings, she determined that at all costs she would cling to the first disinterested admirer she met and, in the face of every opposition, marry him.

"And the first sincere admirer was Jeff?" I prompt her.

"Yes."

"But there were others with axes to grind—what did you call them?—try-outs—before you met him?"

"You know there were." She eyes me fearlessly. "I collected a proposal a week in my first season."

"How many seasons did you have? I've lost count."

"Three. Mummy was mildly annoyed at the end of the first season when I hadn't collared a steady. At the end of the second she was clean mad. When the third began and she had visions of me remaining forever on her hands, she became plain spiteful. Knowing what I know now, I don't wonder. You see, poor Mummy, though she's twice my age, can never have too much of being young. She's naturally selfish, as I am; to have to entertain for me, buy clothes for me, lure admiration for me instead of for herself, made her feel tremendously ancient. She was prevented from living her own life; she was living mine. And the expense began to worry her. She'd gambled on me for three seasons without reward, and the end wasn't in sight.

"Even I began to grow alarmed. The telephone no longer rang ceaselessly with rival boys clamoring to escort me to proms, football matches, theaters. When it did ring, I was over-eager in my gratitude. There were heaps of social events in which I wasn't included or to which I was too proud to go unaccompanied. In three short years my reign was over. I had slipped into the discarded generation. Even the way I danced dated me. Everything that Alec had prophesied was being proved accurate. But his prophecy hadn't gone far enough. There was one affront that he hadn't revealed to me."

"All of this sounds hysterical bosh," I interrupt. "I can't believe that the three brief years which separate eighteen from twenty—"

"A girl who's a prize at eighteen," she checks me, "is a bargain at twenty. She wilts under the pace. But I was speaking about the affront that Alec hadn't revealed to me. It was this: after three years in society, I was a foolish virgin with no oil in my lamp, who had to borrow other people's oil to keep my lamp burning. What I mean is that there were times when I had to rely on husbands of girls who had been débutantes with me to take compassion on me. That's an awfully dangerous experiment. When a single girl starts going with a younger married set, all they want her for, as a rule, is to make a goat of her. She wouldn't be wasting her time in their company if she had a John of her own. She's advertising through a megaphone that she's a failure."

"Why on earth?"

"Open your eyes. Why does a married woman invite her? Only because she has a bachelor side-kick and is employing her girl-friend to distract her husband's attention. Embittered husbands, whose marriages haven't turned out a success, are hugely susceptible. If a bust-up occurs, the girl-friend is always blamed. She's left in the cart.

"Mummy was no fool. She sized up what was happening and put her foot down. Her morality, which till now had lain dormant, rose rampant. If I could find no one to run round with but other women's husbands, she was through with me. She advised me to get a job. What job? Thanks to her, my only proficiency was in flirtation. She didn't care what job. I was nearly twenty-one—a woman, in fact; it was high time I thought for myself. Suddenly she became all worked

up over my daddy. She wouldn't allow him to be kept out of his bed any longer, sitting up to unseemly hours for me. I was ruining his health. If I wasn't prepared to marry, the best solution was that I take an apartment in New York or go traveling; at least lead my own life without inconveniencing hers.

"I became quite penitent and assured her that I had no aversion to marriage: I hadn't met the man whom I could love. She gave me till the end of the season to meet him. I tried to appeal to her better nature by inquiring whether she hadn't married for love. Her mumbled 'Of course,' made me certain that she hadn't. You may have been her intended man, Uncle Biff; at any rate, Daddy wasn't."

"He was richer than I was." The confession slips from me.

"Mummy had married for money; she wanted me to marry for money. Desperate as I was, I pledged myself not to copy her error. Marriage is too sacred, Uncle Biff; it means making oneself responsible for unprotected creatures' lives. I remembered the loneliness, the misdirectedness of my childhood—Mummy always from home, Daddy trying to forget her neglect by overworking. No thanks. If I bore a child, both parents should be glad of it."

HER sincerity surprises me. I'm afraid to speak lest I betray my thoughts. She's been a wife less than a year and already she's abandoned. Her parents at least footed the bill for their mistake by sticking together. It's rather curious that she should set herself up as more righteous. And then there's the memory of the man who preceded me in her apartment.

The atmosphere grows tense. She's reading me like a book.

"I'm a shabby little hypocrite—that's your verdict."

I try to deny her rendering of my embarrassment.

"Oh, yes, it is. Don't let's lie to each other. You've hurt me, Uncle Biff. I can't force myself to tell you any more today."

I shuffle to my feet reluctantly. She sits where she is, staring out at the bleak sky. Having secured my coat and hat, I come back.

"I'm sorry, Mary Angel."

"No need to be,"—she musters a forgiving smile. "We'd completed my adventures with the cherubim. It's quite appropriate that we should make a new beginning when Jeff enters."

"Then you loved Jeff?" I question. "It wasn't a catch-as-catch-can match as some people have hinted?"

"I adored him. I still do."

"I always believed it."

In reverent, middle-age fashion, which I hope conveys my chivalry, I stoop to press my lips gently to her silky, golden head.

Her arms fly up. She's weeping wildly. I kneel beside her.

As unexpectedly as the storm has broken, it spends itself.

"Thank you for believing me. Please go now."

The next episode in the auctioning of Mary Angel is described in the forthcoming June issue.

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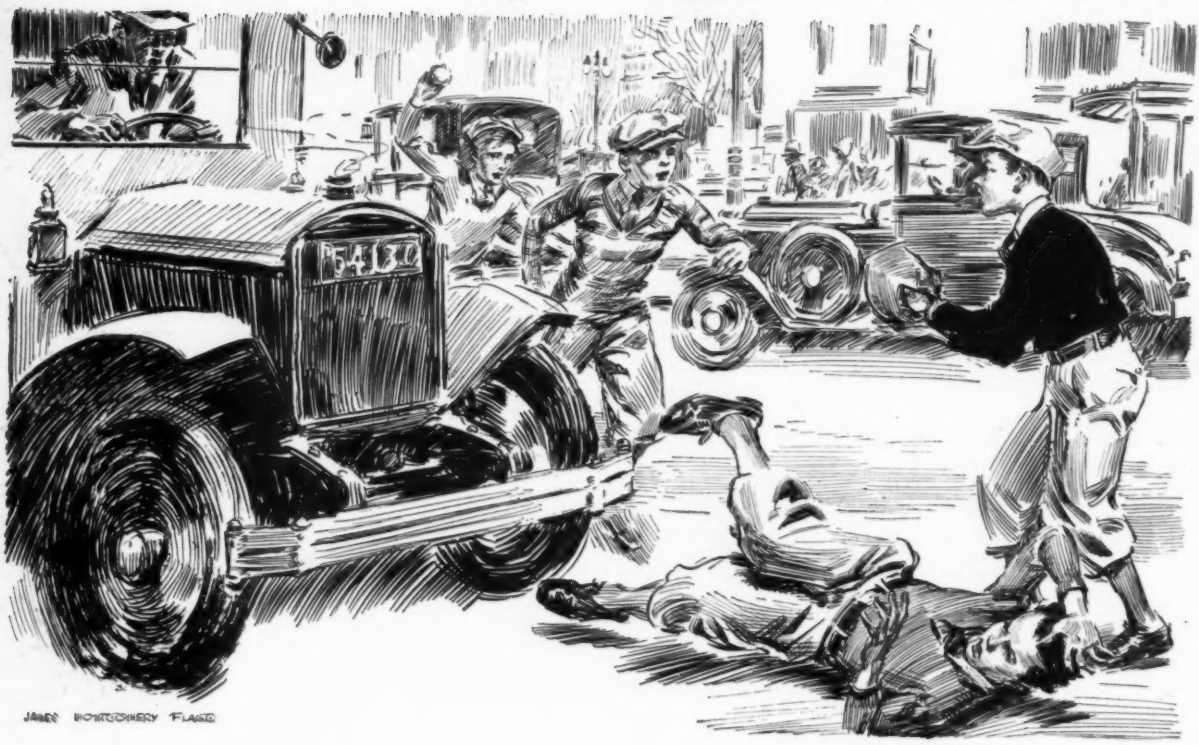

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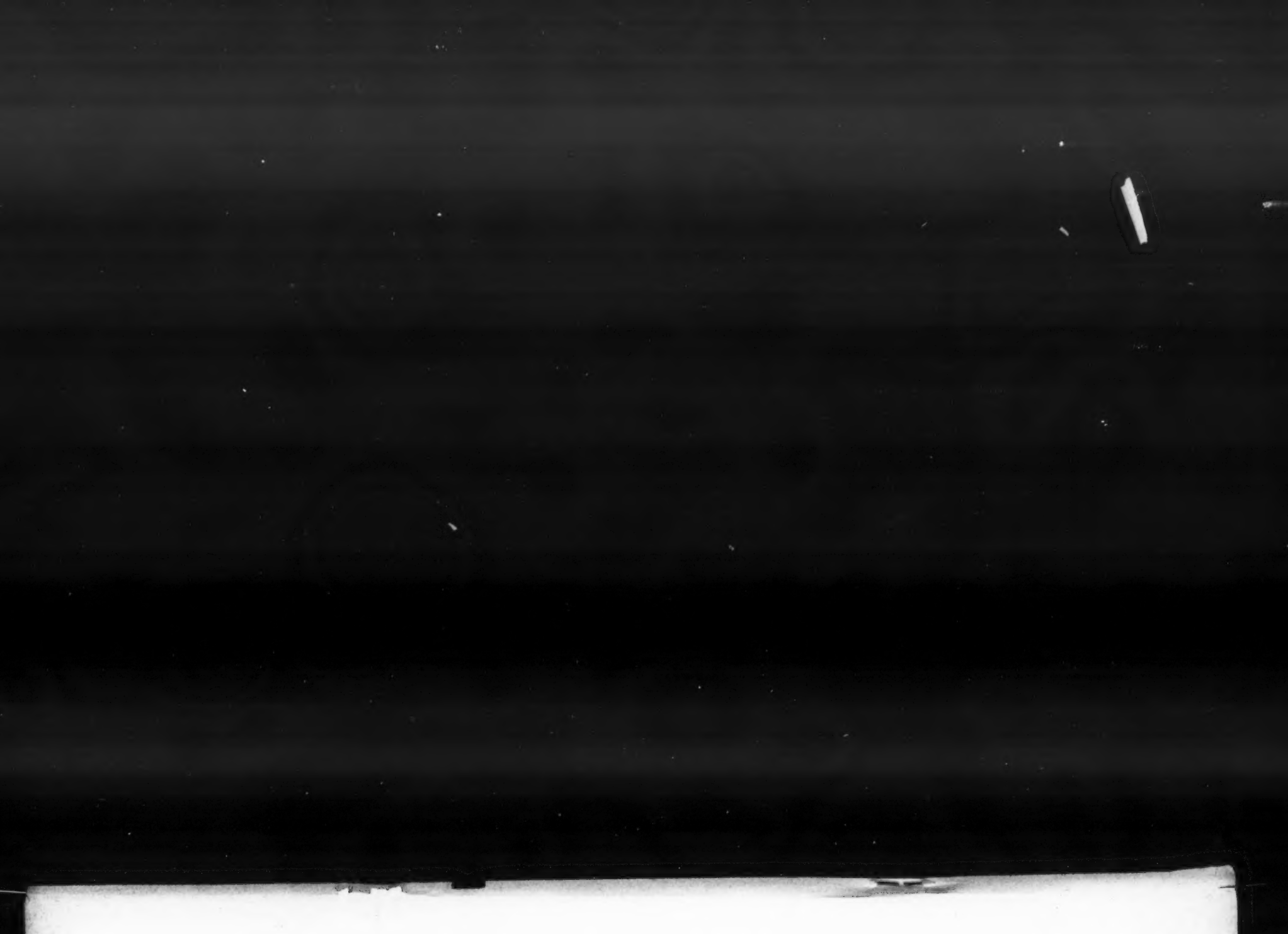

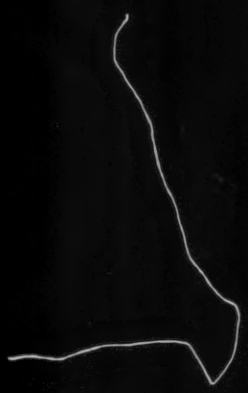

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